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THE NEW REPUBLIC

March 15, 1980 Price One Dollar

The Auto Industry Takes Its Lumps

David Donald on Frederick Douglass • Jack Beatty on Joseph Conrad

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TRB

from Washington
March 15, 1980

The Supreme Legislature

Is the Supreme Court a court or a super-legislature? Many think of it as an automatic vending machine; put in a quarter, press the button, and out tumbles a decision, like a bottle of Coke. The machinery was invented, according to this theory, by the Founding Fathers 200 years ago. It shocks some people to think of the court as a place of uncertainty, where there is constitutional give and take.

Ronald Reagan attacked the court last month over a supposed ruling on federal funds for Medicaid abortions. "This time the court's majority has gone too far!" he cried. "Its unprecedented grasp for power over the federal treasury must be blocked." He said the court needed a new majority and that he would supply it.

Actually the court hadn't made a ruling at all; it had just agreed to a hearing on the subject later; Reagan was shooting from the hip again. (A famous earlier case was in September 1975 when he proposed turning welfare, food stamps, education, health, and other functions amounting to a total of $90 billion—a quarter of the budget—back to the states. Later he said enemies had "distorted" his proposal.)

The tattle-tale book *The Brethren* continues on the best-seller list because people are fascinated with behind-the-scenes tales of these nine black-robed justices in their marble palace, palavering and bargaining. There are too many "leaks" in Washington, the justices seem to have decided, perhaps smarting from their own experience in the book. They have imposed, six to three without oral argument, an unexpectedly harsh penalty against former CIA agent Frank Snepp, requiring him to "disgorge" his profits ($115,000 so far) from his book *Decent Interval*. He disregarded the written pledge of all CIA workers not to publish "any information" without submitting it for prior review. He wrote an angry account of the last hours on the US embassy roof in Saigon in 1975. The Justice Department does not claim that he violated secrets, but that Snepp failed to submit his manuscript in advance to the CIA. Now a case from another agency is on its way up. The Supreme Court can make Washington a different city if it widens its precedent.

It's different in London. Once, while in service there, I dialed a government office for a harmless statistic that I needed, just as I would have done in Washington. You proceed in Washington on the assumption that somewhere, in some agency, some little man knows just the fact that you want, and is bubbling over to give it to you on the phone. In London a shocked upper-class voice registered astonishment at my presumption and ultimately promised to send me a "chit" which, of course, never arrived. There is a ferocious libel law in England, and a sweeping Official Secrets Act. It is questionable whether Watergate could have been exposed in England. It is one of the most surprising differences I know in the usually comprehensible parallelisms of the two common-law countries.

Let me come back to the Supreme Court. If you don't think of it as a policy-making body, study these decisions. One ended racial school segregation, when Congress and president hesitated. Another took prayers out of public schools. The Court instituted one-man-one-vote reapportionment, ending an abuse in which some rotten boroughs had 18 times the ratio of votes to representatives as others. It shook up the criminal justice system, guaranteeing accused persons the right to a lawyer. It loosened federal and state obscenity laws (for better or worse), producing the present controversial era of permissiveness. And it opened up the right of birth control and abortion services to millions of low-income women and girls.

The Constitution does not say in black and white that the public must wait 25 years to see Henry Kissinger's transcripts of his telephone conversations while he was secretary of state. Congress passed a freedom of information act that might be interpreted as giving immediate access to them. But the court last week said no. The vending machine button was pushed and a papal bull popped out: a handy device indeed in an uncertain democracy, if not abused.

It has been abused. In 1932 the court was "in the grip of a sterile and outmoded laissez-faire economic philosophy" says Martin Shapiro, University of California. It tried to excommunicate the New Deal; it failed; it surrendered in 1937. The court has been in general accord with lay authorities since then. Shapiro thinks of the high court as a "super legislature" that can change the direction of public policy in vital particulars. He gives an example.

The Warren Court, dominated by Roosevelt appointees, declared the constitutional right of citizens to equality in many fields such as voting and birth control. It seemed headed toward similar expansion in housing, education, subsistence, and so on. The Burger Court checked the drive abruptly in 1973. The key case involved a wealthy San Antonio school district that was able to maintain a lower local tax rate and yet spend far more per student than poor districts. Was this fair?

The system is universal in the United States. Rich kids get better public schools than poor kids because their parents are wealthy. A plaintiff named Rodriguez brought suit. If upheld, *Rodriguez* would have been as famous as the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that ended school segregation in 1954. Two state supreme courts had already declared against the San Antonio system. But the Burger Court said no, five to four, and the system remains. The majority: the four Nixon appointees (Burger, Powell, Blackmun, Rehnquist) with Justice Stewart concurring. The minority: the egalitarian veterans of the Warren Court—justices Marshall, Douglas, White, and Brennan. That's the way the high court legislates.

This does not mean that the Burger Court is necessarily conservative: on the contrary, in various fields (abortion, for example) it can shock Ronald Reagan. But justices exercise considerable discretion. "There is no reason not to say openly what the justices care so little to disguise," explains Professor Shapiro. "They make their decisions on the basis of seat-of-the-pants predictions of the immediate and direct policy benefits of the various alternatives available to them."

Few people want to believe this. They prefer the vending-machine illusion. It is to be hoped that the high court doesn't extend the Snepp gag rule all over Washington.

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Correspondence

Bolstering developing colleges

To the editors:

We, whose signatures appear below, take issue with judgments and innuendoes generated from Howie Kurtz's article "Those Who Can't Teach, Consult" (*TNR*, January 5 & 12), where the right of the Robert R. Moton memorial Institute to exist was challenged. We respect the principles and ideals of objectivity and thoroughness of inquiry which characterize the best of investigative journalism, but we certainly question the application of these ideals in this *New Republic* article. Our concern about accuracy in many of the article's assertions will be itemized in a series of questions directed to Mr. Kurtz and the editors of *The New Republic*:

How does the disbursement of the Moton budget compare to the disbursement of budgets of other research centers such as Palo Alto? Do the salaries and travel expenses differ significantly in favor of Moton consultants? Do the stipends awarded to Moton scholars appear to be higher than stipends awarded at other institutions of research and faculty development? Why did you neglect to mention that the scholars' stipends at Moton are lower than their present salaries?

Do you assume that the research done by Moton scholars will not benefit developing colleges as you imply in the last sentence of the article?

Do you feel that predominantly black colleges are in some way undeserving of equal research facilities? Are there any tennis courts and swimming pools at sister research centers? What is so wrong about one tennis court and one small swimming pool at a center that houses a large number of people?

What is the implication of the statement in your report: "Besides, the Moton people liked the neighborhood" at "fashionable" S Street? Do you mean to imply that consultants of a predominantly black organization should not have an office in this "neighborhood"?

Is St. Paul's College legally required to send scholars to Moton? Did you ask their college administration why this is not done?

In your research for this article did you attempt to catalogue and assess the quality and number of publications and works in progress produced both by the Institute and its scholars?

Do you mean to imply that research centers serving predominantly black institutions should be either nonexistent or inferior in facilities, stipends, and salaries?

Have you contacted appropriate presidents and deans of the developing colleges and universities that Moton serves? If so, why haven't their opinions been presented?

Given the fact that most faculty at developing institutions are not given release time to pursue their research projects as faculty are in many ivy league schools, a well deserved leave of absence, granted on a competitive basis for research, is perhaps more crucial for such faculty as they attempt to compete in their fields and to excel in the classroom. The Moton Institute, therefore, is of immense value. In order to promote equal education for all in this country it will be necessary to maintain institutions such as Moton while at the same time bolstering developing colleges if we are to enrich those students for whom Mr. Kurtz shows such genuine concern.

Dr. Robert N. List
Moton Scholar, Class of 1980

Dr. Gerald Hurwitz
Moton Scholar, Class of 1980

Blyden Jackson
Critic-Scholar, Moton Fellowships Program

Howie Kurtz replies:

The Moton Institute is welcome to support the PhD scholars at its Virginia estate in as fine a manner as possible, or to rent the nicest office in Washington it can find. What's questionable is whether the taxpayers should pay for all this under a program designed to help struggling colleges, not consulting firms. Neither the Office of Education, officials at St. Paul's College (the conduit for this grant), nor Moton's president has been able to explain how the center is spending its $300,000 a year. That's precisely why Congress is now moving to limit the role of consultants in this program.

Howie Kurtz
Washington, DC

Afghanistan matters

To the editors:

Now that Ronald Steel has declared that Afghanistan does not matter ("Afghanistan Doesn't Matter," *TNR*, February 16, 1980), we can all breathe a sigh of relief and go back to business as usual. It is a pity that the victims of the Soviet execution squads did not realize that they were simply playing into Mr. Carter's election eve tactics.

To compare the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with our landing of Marines in Santo Domingo is absurd. Did the United States execute the head of state who asked for our assistance? Did we have American firing squads roaming the countryside seeking victims so that an appropriate example could be made for anyone contemplating dissent?

Be it by accident or design, Steel is a Soviet apologist in a situation that can only be called tragic for the people of Afghanistan. It is now our shame that in the past Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Armenia did not matter either. People are shedding blood and we still have myopic "experts" spouting off about some "legitimate spheres of Soviet influence." In his recent essay on communism, Solzhenitsyn writes that "Communism is something new, unprecedented in world history; it is fruitless to seek analogies." As long as we in the West think that Afghanistan does not matter, we are in grave danger.

Andrew Zaplatynsky
Cincinnati, Ohio

'The Brethren' defended

To the editors:

The Brethren is not without its faults, but Graham Hughes, in his review of Bob Woodward's and Scott Armstrong's new book (*TNR*, February 23, 1980), practically declares a holy war against the authors. Their unpardonable sin? Being so impudent in the first place as to dare to reveal the inner workings of the Supreme Court; inasmuch as their undertaking "only debases America's finest institution." Indeed, Hughes's review reads very much like a sermon. He flails Woodward and Armstrong for their "infantilism," ignorance, viciousness, and even greed (it is interesting that Hughes finds it necessary to engage in the very character assassinating he repeatedly imputes to the authors). As perhaps befits a law professor, Hughes lectures his readers in a patronizing way about the legal system and then preaches repentance on our part for having read, or been tempted to read, the blasphemies of Woodward and Armstrong.

(continued on page 35)

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 182, No. 11, Issue 3401, March 15, 1980. Published weekly (except the issues of January 5, July 12, August 9, September 13) and distributed by The New Republic, Inc., 1220 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. Phone (202) 331-7494. Single copy, $1.00; Yearly subscriptions, $28; foreign, $31; students, $17.

Copyright 1980 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISBN 0028-6583). Item g. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

March 15, 1980

A Sell-Out, Not a Foul-Up

The Carter administration's explanation of how the US came to vote "yes" on a UN Security Council resolution on Saturday, only to have the president renounce it the following Monday, is not believable. But even accepting that explanation—a "failure in communication"—the episode reveals the Carter administration once again as both incompetent and reckless in the conduct of foreign policy. Whatever the explanation, it is part of a consistent pattern of erratic behavior in diplomacy which betrays our allies, encourages our enemies, and misleads others whose friendship we seek.

The latest Security Council condemnation of the UN's favorite whipping boy, the one our country supported, was carefully drafted to undermine the Camp David agreements, which form the cornerstone of American efforts to secure peace in the Middle East. The notion that the president of the United States is unable to make himself understood on these matters to his secretary of state, or that his secretary of state cannot be trusted to understand and follow orders, is frightening. The administration's self-proclaimed inability to transmit policy from Washington to its UN ambassador in New York, or even to transmit a draft text from New York to Washington, without confusion or technical mishaps, is merely absurd. Such communications failures may help explain why our hostages are still captive in Tehran despite the presence there of a UN commission which was supposed to assure their release. But what happened at the Security Council was not simply a breakdown in communications.

The US vote for the resolution was the result of a deliberate decision of the president and the secretary of state that Israel should be censured for its settlement plans in ancient Hebron. We have written here often that the Begin government's creation of new settlements in the populated areas of the West Bank is a disservice to the cause of peace. Begin's Hebron plans, though quite implausible, were very inflammatory. Given Israel's dependence on America, the US is fully entitled to express its disapproval of the settlements policy, and to make Israel feel that disapproval concretely. But it is quite another matter to use the discredited forum of the United Nations as the vehicle of our rebuke. To do so establishes the Soviet Union and its intentions in the Middle East as unavoidable reference points for the terms of our reproach, and puts us in league with those Arab countries which show no pretense of interest in peace with Israel. Moreover, the Begin government's Hebron decision was a particularly inappropriate occasion to join in the diplomatic overkill which is an inevitable feature of any UN declaration on the Arab-Israeli conflict. There probably will be no Hebron settlements. What Jew in his or her right mind would want to live in the middle of hostile Arab Hebron? And there is no money available for those few fanatics who might. There was much dissent in Begin's cabinet over the Hebron decision. Indeed, there is rising opposition in Israel to the entire settlements policy. Begin's impudent Hebron resolve would have strengthened this opposition, if it weren't for US support of a UN resolution so contemptuous of Israeli concerns.

The administration's defenders argue that the resolution was the most obvious way of sending Israel a stern message. Supporting the resolution also seemed a good way of signaling the Arab nations that the US appreciates their vocal criticisms of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. America's desire to thank the Islamic world, in the precious currency of our relations with an ally, for doing something entirely in the Islamic world's interest—protesting the brutal invasions of a Moslem country—is yet another example of our self-fulfilling self-definition as a mendicant in world affairs. But the American effort to secure allies in Islam against Moscow provided an irresistible opportunity for those in the State Department who are always eager to break bonds between the US and Israel.

The State Department spent the two days following the Security Council vote vigorously insisting that it was fully in keeping with past US policy. This stopped, of course, when President Carter repudiated the vote as a mistake. The resolution decidedly is *not* consistent with US policy. That was why the White House had wanted references to Jerusalem removed from the text. Ambassador Donald F. McHenry claims to have mis-

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understood Washington's objection, assuming that once the paragraph dealing specifically with Jerusalem was deleted, he was free to vote in favor. Herein lies the alleged "foul-up." The explanation is tenable only in one particular: President Carter may not have realized that other offensive references to Jerusalem stayed in the text. But everyone else involved—McHenry, Assistant Secretary for International Organizations William Maynes, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Harold Saunders, and Secretary Vance himself—had the words in front of them. There is no way that these seasoned diplomats could have failed to understand the meaning of the remaining allusions to Jerusalem. They knew what they were endorsing.

But the persistent reference to Jerusalem is only part of the problem with the resolution. Its text condemns Israeli settlements and general misdeeds in "Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967." Then the phrase "including Jerusalem" (all of Jerusalem, by the way, not even simply "East Jerusalem") is routinely tagged on. Even without the Jerusalem references, the wording of the new resolution is precisely how the Arab and Soviet blocs in the UN have tried over many years to restate Resolution 242, against American objections. This restatement in accord with Arab wishes has also been a goal of Harold Saunders, whose deft hand is evident in this latest effort to transform American policy without a public debate and as a piece of diplomatic legerdemain. But Resolution 242, which is the only accepted basis for any of the Middle East negotiations that have taken place, speaks only of Israeli withdrawal "from territories occupied." It does not say "from all territories" or "the territories"; it does not speak of Jerusalem; and it most certainly does not term these territories "Palestinian." This is not verbal quibbling. The latest resolution amounts to conceding the important points that were purposely left ambiguous, and subject to negotiation, in Resolution 242. The United States previously has consistently rejected any new phraseology. America's commitment to Israel not to permit tampering with 242 is viewed with utmost seriousness in Jerusalem, and logically so. The last time Saunders tried to tamper with the language of 242, Ambassador Robert Strauss told President Carter that this threatened the negotiations among Israel, Egypt, and the US, not least because of objections from President Sadat.

The president's really quite pathetic clarification does not even deal with this sleight-of-hand effort by his underlings to change American policy. Turning only on the Jerusalem references, the president's statement ignores the fact that the Security Council resolution also went well beyond stated US policy on the question of Israeli settlement. Carter owes the American people a clarification of his views on other aspects of the resolution that contradict past US commitments. America's opposition to the establishment of new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories—grounded in the contention that the settlements are illegal, which they probably are not, and an obstacle to peace, which they are—never has extended to a call for the dismantling of existing settlements. Indeed, when the dismantlement issue arose at Camp David, Carter explicitly assured Begin that the United States would not support any such demand. Yet the Security Council resolution the US supported "calls upon the Government and people of Israel . . . to dismantle the existing settlements. . . ." Needless to add, "including Jerusalem." According to the White House, McHenry also sought to have the dismantlement provision eliminated from the text. He failed in this endeavor. Despite this second substantial failure to bring the resolution into line with American policy, Vance instructed McHenry to vote "yes" on the resolution, and then to issue a statement disclaiming the requirement that Israel dismantle existing settlements.

Vance's decision to pursue this strategy despite its fundamental inconsistencies with American policy signifies a dangerous willingness to break commitments we've solemnly made to allies whom we can best influence to do what they may fear doing only if they can really trust us concerning what is most urgent to them. The episode also indicates the obsessive quality of the State Department's desire to condemn Israel. Why, after all, could we not have criticized Israel on our own and in our own words? This would have been something much harder for Begin to dismiss. In the United Nations, words are the only weapon available: language, therefore, is everything. If the text of a resolution does not accord with United States policy, we have no business supporting the resolution.

Ordinarily a disclaimer from such a resolution in the Security Council would be merely irrelevant. The UN is not the Supreme Court with concurring opinions and separate dissents. But in this instance, because references to Jerusalem remained undisclaimed, McHenry's "disclaimer" regarding the dismantling issue actually compounded the damage. McHenry told the Security Council that America regarded the dismantlement requirement in paragraph six as "impractical." Our ambassador went on to suggest, at the instruction of his colleagues at the State Department, that after Israel withdraws, " . . . there will be a need for housing and related infrastructure for the inhabitants." Thus American policy, as articulated by McHenry, now envisages moving the Jews out of East Jerusalem (and southern and northern Jerusalem too)—as well as out of the West Bank—and moving Arabs not only into the settlements but also into the new housing built on what were once wastes at Ramat Eshkol and Gilo, into the dormitories adjacent to the Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University, and into the reconstructed Jewish quarter of the Old City.

The State Department, and particularly Secretary Vance, have done serious harm to the cause of peace by indulging Arab fantasies that Israel can be compelled to withdraw from East Jerusalem and that the city can

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again be divided. The inclusion of the six references to Jerusalem may not have come to President Carter's attention until after the vote. The president maintains that America is still strongly committed to the proposition that " . . . Jerusalem should be undivided . . . and that its status should be determined in the negotiations for a comprehensive peace settlement." But it is clear that McHenry and Vance favor the absolute equation of Jerusalem with the West Bank, as expressed in the Security Council resolution. The issue has been discussed and rediscussed for far too long to permit anyone to believe that the repeated phrase, "including Jerusalem," is of little or no consequence. If the president has changed the American position on Jerusalem, let him say so. If he believes that thriving neighborhoods with thousands of Jews, no one of whom has displaced a single Arab, must now be themselves displaced from Jerusalem, let the American people judge him on this now. If that is not his policy, he is presently burdened with a secretary of state, two assistant secretaries, and a cabinet-level UN ambassador who disagree with his views, and who are prepared to allow their dissent to be slipped by the president in the form of a Security Council resolution. The suggestion of a blunder simply does not address the fact that the secretary of state ordered a "yes" vote on a resolution which embodied demands directly counter to American policy commitments to a faithful, if troublesome, ally. Vance cannot pretend that he did not know the resolution contradicted these commitments: the Israeli ambassador told him so, Ambassador Linowitz told him so, White House officials told him so. He knew it himself.

The White House "clarification" of the "foul-up" remains inadequate. Cyrus Vance, his paladin Hodding Carter assures us, has accepted "responsibility." The phrase is empty unless it is followed by appropriate action. Given the magnitude of the issues involved—there can be no doubt that the US vote has jeopardized the autonomy talks, encouraged the "rejection front" Arabs, strengthened the hands of the pro-settlement hard right wing in Israel, and made America itself seem ridiculous—the appropriate action is the resignation of the "responsible" officials.

Cutting Words

The news that inflation in January reached an annual rate of 18 percent shook up a lot of people, not the least of them in Washington. The first casualty was the president's budget, submitted less than two months ago and calling for expenditures of $616 billion in the 1981 fiscal year. Last week no fewer than 43 senators, including 34 Republicans and nine Democrats, declared that the president's budget was too big, even though it would raise spending by only nine percent over the current year—considerably less than the rate of inflation. So they got together and co-sponsored a resolution demanding that $26 billion be cut from the president's budget. Hardly had the senators reached this conclusion than the White House itself, apparently spooked by either the soaring inflation rate or the specter of being upstaged, put out the word to department secretaries to find ways to cut their own budgets by $20 billion. Practically overnight everyone in Washington was converted to the new budget-cutting orthodoxy.

None of this should be taken very seriously. There is no reason to think that any serious or long-lasting reductions in federal spending will come of the current commotion. It is easy at the beginning of the budget process to declare that the federal government should spend less money. It will be harder later on actually to decide which programs, and which beneficiaries, will be the victims of this frugality.

The 43 senators who called for cutting spending deserve special ridicule. Theirs was no serious effort to pare federal spending, but merely a play for headlines—which the newspapers dutifully provided. It turned out that the 43 agreed only on the need to reduce the budget, and on the amount by which it should be reduced—$26 billion, a figure apparently taken out of the blue. The points of agreement are trivial compared to the points of disagreement. The 43 differ on how the savings should be used: some want a tax cut, some want a reduction in the budget deficit. More important, they actually proposed no specific cuts at all, since they disagree on which spending programs should have to make do with less or no money. Democrat William Proxmire, for example, would pare the Pentagon budget, though by only a modest amount. But most of his fellow co-sponsors think that defense spending should be increased.

It is possible to cut the federal budget, but it is harder than generally acknowledged. Fully half of the budget is devoted to "entitlement" programs—those in which specific beneficiaries (like retirees on Social Security) are guaranteed certain benefits by the law. More than one-fifth of the total budget, in fact, goes to pay Social Security benefits. Another quarter of the budget is what is known loosely as "uncontrollable"—money that will be spent, thanks to appropriations made in previous years, unless Congress takes positive action to prevent it. That leaves only one quarter of the budget where there is much room for cutting. The problem, at least this year, is that 60 percent of this chunk goes to defense. If military spending is sacrosanct, as the White House has made clear and as Congress apparently agrees, then only about 10 percent of the budget remains. That is a substantial sum, but it encompasses thousands of programs, most of them individually small and many of them politically sensitive.

Most likely no one in either the administration or Congress is genuinely determined to cut the budget. If they were, they would have included the Pentagon budget in the search for fat, and they would have

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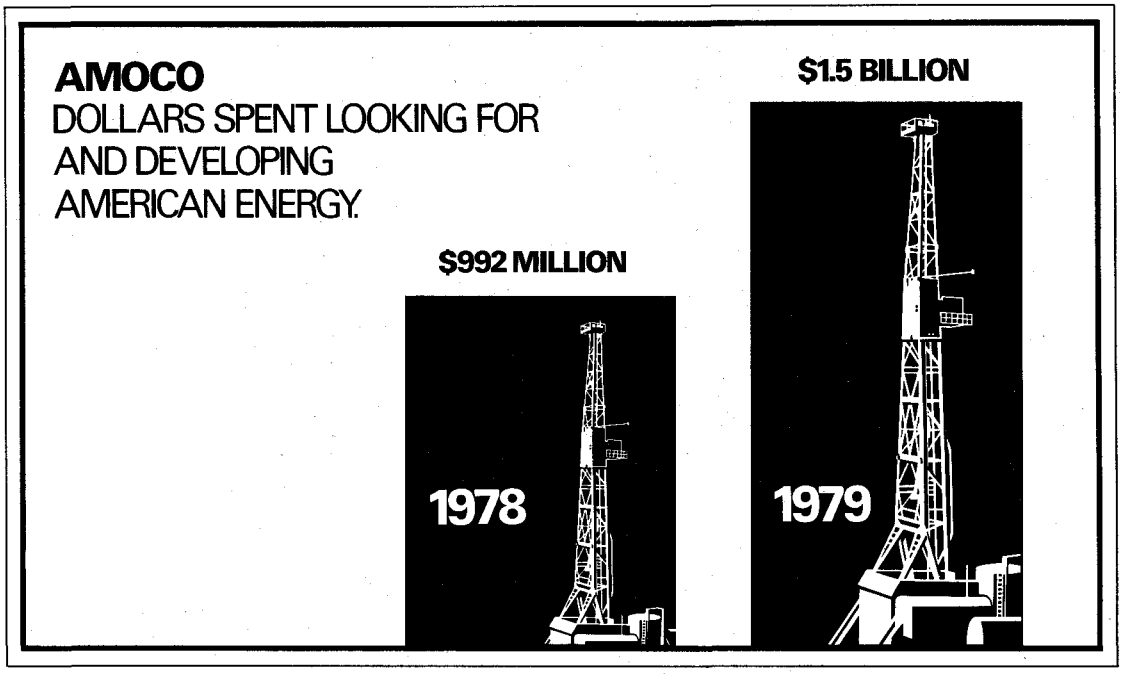

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Most of this money was spent in searching for traditional oil and natural gas, but we put a lot of dollars into other forms of energy, too—like oil shale and gasohol.

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You hear a lot these days about "excessive oil profits." But when you get right down to it, the amount of money we earn from each gallon of petroleum product sold is only about 2.8¢ per gallon. Earnings are vital to our business. They help us develop new supplies of American energy... and create jobs along the way. But most of the money you spend on gasoline is going right into the pockets of the foreign countries that supply crude oil.

We're paying more for foreign oil than ever before.
Foreign oil prices have risen dramatically in the last 12 months. At Amoco, we paid $3.8 billion for foreign oil last year—$1.5 billion more than we paid in 1978. And the amount of money America spent on foreign oil jumped from $40 billion in 1978 to about $60 billion last year; even though the amount of oil America actually imported remained nearly the same. Right now, America imports nearly half the oil it uses. The only real answer to excessive foreign oil imports—and the damage this causes to America's economy—is to find and develop more American energy.

We want to outdo ourselves in 1980.
Our country's energy problem is still with us. It's a fact that conventional oil and natural gas will remain our country's primary fuels into the next century... but known reserves are being used up. We plan to spend even more in 1980 to drill more wells and make more progress in synthetic fuel development. We are going to do our best to help get you the energy you need.

America runs better on American oil.

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mentioned some specific programs that might be cut back or eliminated.

We can suggest a few cuts of our own. Freezing the pay of federal employees, the most powerful interest group in Washington, would save $2.9 billion. Increasing user fees on waterways and at airports would save another $1.9 billion, while offending the vocal lobbies that support them. Eliminating price support loans to farmers, whose votes could be decisive in any number of midwestern states next November, would be worth $1.7 billion. Abolishing postal subsidies to favored users would cut the budget by another $1.6 billion, at the expense of provoking a good deal of editorial criticism from magazines like this one that would have to pay higher postal rates. Ending revenue sharing grants to states would save $2.4 billion, while antagonizing hundreds of state officials with ready access to the news media.

Then there are any number of cuts that might be made safely in the defense budget, but which will not go over well in the current hawkish climate. Even here there are reductions that no reasonable observer would regard as the least bit risky. The Pentagon could save an estimated one billion dollars next year simply by closing bases in the US which it would like to close but has kept open to satisfy influential members of Congress. Ending the subsidy to commissaries, which do the same things as Safeway, only much more expensively, would reduce spending by $700 million. But there are also weapons systems that cost far more than their military value, such as the XM-1 tank ($1.1 billion), the F-14 fighter (nearly $800 million), and the CG-47 Aegis cruiser (about $800 million). Any of these could be reduced. The total savings from all these cuts would come close to covering the projected deficit.

None of these cuts is likely to be made, of course, particularly those in the defense budget. Nor, for that matter, are Congress and the administration likely to make any large or long-lasting reductions in federal spending. There is nothing easier or politically sounder than for a politician to say, "We should reduce federal spending." And there is nothing harder than for him to take the criticism and political risk that accompanies any decision actually to cut back or eliminate a specific program. At the heart of the problem is an unalterable fact of life in the modern welfare state: the pressure against cutting spending on any particular program almost always will be greater than the pressure for cutting it. The reason is that each program is of vital importance to its beneficiaries, and of only minor importance to the public at large. The level of, say, farm subsidies can mean thousands of dollars a year to a typical farmer, but only a few dollars a year to a typical taxpayer. That's why farmers spend a lot more time lobbying and writing letters to their congressmen supporting farm subsidies than taxpayers do lobbying against them. But taken together, all the wasteful spending programs perpetuated by this sort of special interest pressure hurts us all—including the people who benefit directly from them.

Coming:

Feminists and Their Maids.

TIPsy Over Inflation

In a recent editorial half-heartedly endorsing wage and price controls ("Time for Controls?" *TNR*, February 23), we observed that the *New York Times* editorial page was the only influential voice outside the Carter administration that still put much stock in voluntary guidelines. In light of the present 18 percent rate of inflation, the *Times* apparently has abandoned guidelines. Instead, it urgently endorses a "tax-based incomes policy" or TIP. This acronym covers a variety of schemes that were popular among economists a year or two ago. All involve tax surcharges for excessive wage and price increases and/or tax credits for showing restraint. Like guidelines, TIP plans are an attempt to get the benefits of mandatory wage and price controls without suffering the disadvantages. As such, they are an intellectual mistake. It cannot be done.

TIP plans are the mirror image of guidelines. Guidelines attempt to impose a stigma on those who break the rules, without exacting any concrete penalty. TIP plans exact a financial penalty for wage and price misbehavior, but do so without a stigma attached. People are free to raise their wages or prices as long as they're willing to take the tax consequences. They are influenced, but not constrained. This is supposed to be TIP's advantage over mandatory controls. But the advantage is illusory. There still must be rules. And you still must choose between simple rules that create massive economic distortions and inefficiencies if they are observed for very long, and more flexible rules that create massive red tape and political erosion of the standards. If your tax incentive induces a producer to hold down a particular price, the effect will be the same as if you had mandatory controls. If that price goes up despite the tax inducement, the effect will be the same as if you had no incomes policy at all. The lukewarm enforcement mechanism doesn't distinguish in any way between "good" and "bad" price increases.

TIP may be easier to swallow for those who are squeamish about controls, but it solves nothing. If it's possible to write price and wage regulations that would control inflation at a reasonable cost, such regulations might as well be mandatory. If price and wage regulations inevitably cause more problems than they

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solve, there's no point to installing them with the provision that they needn't be obeyed. We think that mandatory controls could be a useful *minor* part of a serious inflation plan. Guidelines and TIP schemes are worthless.

The Anderson Factor

John Anderson has thus far provided most of the interesting ideas of the 1980 campaign, and the simple good common sense too. Now he also has provided its latest big surprise: his exceptionally strong showing in both Vermont and Massachusetts. This is the kind of development that should keep the experts modest, and the voters immune to their expertise. Not since Gene McCarthy in 1968 has a candidate been so scoffed at, and not since McCarthy has a candidate so single-handedly brought a breath of fresh air into the suffocating theater of banality our national politics has become. The other GOP contenders are trying to downgrade Anderson's achievement by saying that it was built largely on the shoe leather of college students and on the votes of independents and momentary converts from the Democratic side. This is the kind of thinking that has doomed the Republican party to its all but permanent minority status.

The odds, of course, remain very much against Anderson, not least because he has forsworn competing in various southern primaries in which the momentum will likely be seized by one or another of his rivals. But choosing the places to play is not his strategy alone. Whatever happened, after all, to big John Connally, the man with the unlimited bankroll to match his unlimited ego? He's barely shown his face anywhere but South Carolina, as if some eked-out victory in Thurmond territory will persuade us that Connally has captured a significant following outside the congenial corporate boardrooms of the *Fortune 500*. In any case, if the Republicans want to commit suicide, they are just about morally obligated to drink the hemlock from the cup of Ronald Reagan, Goldwater's Goldwater—Goldwater's own candidate, in fact.

If the Republicans decide to choose life, however, the emergence of John Anderson will have played its part. His campaign on the left of the GOP shifts the balance of power in the party to its center. This may be sparse consolation for the enthusiastic following of the Illinois congressman. But it is not usually the fate of idealistic candidacies to have their dreams come true. So even if Anderson has been pulling voters from George Bush in the primaries, it is still Bush, unfortunately, who may be the prime beneficiary of the declining fortunes of the Reaganite right. Or Gerald Ford, whose stature *mirabile dictu* (at least when contrasted with the multiple botch-ups of his successor) may now appear positively Solonesque. Nor will his pledge to reinstall Henry Kissinger as secretary of state diminish Ford's appeal.

The other big news out of Massachusetts, of course, is that Ted Kennedy's campaign is still alive, if not exactly well. Kennedy's two-to-one margin over President Carter was a surprise also, though it is a mark of how serious his troubles are that this should be so. Massachusetts remains the family plantation, and had Kennedy's tally fallen below 60 percent—despite the support for the president of Governor King and his cretinous cohort—Ted's presidential effort would have ended in the streets of Boston where it started.

Just now, however, Kennedy's prospects are brighter than they've been, less because of the results in the Bay State than because of the economic disaster engulfing this timid and unimaginative administration. Senator Kennedy's call for controls at least commits him to doing something that might actually curb the inflation rate before it hits 20 or 25 percent. If the economic crisis increasingly has become an opportunity for Kennedy, our international predicament—for no logical reason at all—has continued working to Carter's advantage. It could have been otherwise. But Senator Kennedy has seemed to argue for an even less forceful response to the provocations in Iran and Afghanistan than the president. It's hard to imagine a less resolute or less relevant policy in defense of US and Western interests than the one the president is now pursuing, which is one reason why Kennedy's criticisms of administration behavior on West Asia have fallen on deaf ears among the American people. To be sure, the senator has scored some telling points against Carter's indiscriminate bullying of our ally, Israel. But the defense of Israel does not by itself make a firm foreign policy. It is also not credible in its own terms if its context is overall weakness and fear. And credibility is where we came in, or rather where we got off, with Jimmy Carter. Unless something changes quickly, the credibility issue in foreign policy will work for the Republicans, and just possibly the most trigger-happy ones at that.

Maybe John Anderson will run as an independent. But then, as we all know, the rules are rigged and he won't get on the ballot in many states or get the federal funding that the major party candidates will receive that might allow him to be heard. It's depressing all around.

White House Watch
The Hostage Trap

Between November 4, when Iranian thugs who will not again be called "students" in this space seized the US embassy in Tehran and took its occupants hostage, and November 9, when a White House statement first expressed the President's views of that event, two

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decisions were made. They have largely guided the US response to the outrage. One of the decisions as reflected in the White House statement was that "the most important concern . . . is the safety of our fellow citizens held in Tehran." The second decision was that the use of military force of any kind, from a commando rescue to war on Iran, would doom the hostages.

The story behind those decisions remains a hidden story. One of the possibly four or five officials at the White House and elsewhere who has worked intimately with Carter on the problem and knows the story said the other day, "We are really off the air on that one," and they are. Most of the purported inside stories you read or hear come from mid- and low-level officials who at best have nothing more than impressions to share and at worst only their ignorance to conceal. One impression, though, is worth cautionary attention. It is that in the five days between November 4 and 9 a study of the practicality of a commando-type rescue attack on the embassy compound was ordered up, reviewed, and set permanently aside. The conclusion was that it could not accomplish anything more than the death of captors and captives. There is an indication, derived from Carter's statement in a television interview January 20, that he never gave the possibility serious consideration. He said: "I have felt from the very beginning that the initiation of a military action or the causing of bloodshed would undoubtedly result in the death of the hostages." This and other statements by him and his spokesmen also seem to have ruled out another approach that might have been possible in the first days. It would have entailed a statement by the President that on a certain day one or more US Air Force transports would land at the Tehran airport; that he, the President, would ask Congress to declare the US at war with Iran if the hostages were not put aboard the aircraft and allowed to depart safely.

What the world has here, in Tehran and Bogota and elsewhere, is a dreadful question that is more talked about in private conversation than discussed in print and on the air. It is for how long a nation places human life, including the lives of its own people, ahead of the national interest and the national repute for resolute firmness in what is called peacetime. Frank Reynolds of ABC asked Carter in late December whether he foresaw a time when he might have to choose between American lives and American honor. Carter answered in terms so delphic that they constitute an historic oddity. He said: "That's an option that we have explored very thoroughly. We have, obviously, long range interest in the Persian Gulf region, the Middle East. . . . [W]e cannot separate the safety of the 50 hostages from our long term American interest, because they are so completely intertwined. I don't see any conflict between the two. And for us to peremptorily cause bloodshed or start a war in Iran, and in that entire Persian Gulf region, just to show that I am brave . . . would be exactly the wrong thing to do for the hostages and for our long range interests. So I don't see any conflict between the two."

There has been a progression away from the original "most important concern" with the lives of the hostages, however. The President realized, pretty late, that ruling out military retaliation of any kind was a mistake. Carter said in a speech January 4 that "we hope" to secure the release of the hostages "without bloodshed." January 7 and 8, in a TV interview and in remarks to congressmen, Carter formalized the change in his priorities as follows: "Our first commitment has been to protect the interests of our nation . . . secondly, . . . to ensure the lives and safety of the American hostages; third to secure . . . their release; fourth, to avoid bloodshed which would very likely lead to the death of the hostages; and fifth and most difficult, to maintain support for the American position by the vast majority of nations on earth." Carter has made his fifth point so often and so strongly of late that one is led to wonder, probably unfairly, whether it's become his first point. Also on January 8, Carter capped his semantic show of force in the hostage situation with this generally overlooked statement: "They [the embassy captors] know that the consequences to Iran will be quite severe if our hostages are injured or killed, and I think only the presence of a very strong military force in the Arabian Sea has deterred them so far from taking action that would have been even more abhorrent to the rest of the world."

In the same period, after UN secretary-general Waldheim visited Tehran in early January, Carter let Press Secretary Jody Powell say for him that the US might go along with some sort of UN commission to hear Iran's grievances against the US and the deposed shah, *but only after the hostages were released.* During weeks of hidden activity, including secret visits to Paris by Harold Saunders of the State Department and Carter's staff chief Hamilton Jordan for discussions (through intermediaries, a Carter spokesman said) with Iranian foreign minister Ghotbzadeh, the administration backed away from prior release of the hostages. The back-away came to a climax February 20 with the simultaneous issue of Waldheim and White House statements that raised false hopes throughout the world. The statements deserve more examination than they have received.

Waldheim said that he had appointed "a Commission

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How Presidential Campaigns Ought to Work.

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of Inquiry to undertake a fact-finding mission to Iran to hear Iran's grievances and to allow an early solution of the crisis between Iran and the United States"—meaning, to bring about the release of the hostages. Waldheim added that "Iran desires to have the Commission speak to each of the hostages." He said later that he had a statement of this desire in writing from Tehran.

A White House statement issued immediately afterward said: "He [Waldheim] has stated that the commission will speak with each of our people." Waldheim had not quite said that. The White House statement said that "in concurring the United States has taken note of the Secretary General's statement that the commission will undertake a fact-finding mission," which Waldheim indeed had said. The White House statement continued, in a context suggesting that it was still quoting Waldheim: "It will not be a tribunal," meaning a court of inquiry. Waldheim had not said this. Later he repeatedly refused to say it and refused to support the US insistence that "the hostages must under no circumstances be subjected to interrogation." Waldheim also repeatedly refused to go along with the US implication that in connection with the establishment of the UN commission there was a stated, definite undertaking to release the hostages. There is no evidence from any quarter that there was such a compact.

What is one to gather now? In sparsely noted rhetoric, the President has laid a predicate for an attempt at military solution of a problem that he has also said is militarily unsolvable. That does not bother this writer much. If you agree that the particular lives imperiled are "the most important concern" and that Carter was right about that "from the beginning," semantic modifications notwithstanding, then all the quarrels with what he's done and not done become petty and irrelevant. He is dealing, as he has said in effect, with a bunch of uncoordinated nuts. He also is dealing with a situation that could sink him as rapidly as it raised him from the political depths last November.

John Osborne

Politics

No Hayseeds Here

Norwich, Vermont

Facts to Consider Before Proceeding:

—In the spring of 1791, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were arrested in Vermont for riding in an open carriage on Sunday.

—In 1941, Vermont declared war on Germany three months before the United States.

—Congressman Matthew Lyon of Vermont was called "a strange offensive brute / Too wild to tame, too base to shoot." He brained a Connecticut congressman on the floor of Congress with a pair of fire tongs; was arrested for insulting President John Adams; served four months in jail in Vergennes, Vermont; and was reelected to Congress by a two-to-one majority.

An Apt, Though Superfluous Epigraph:

A. Lincoln (request for troops), April 14, 1861: "Washington is in grave danger. What may we expect from Vermont?"

There's an old saying about presidential primaries in Vermont, but nobody recalls what it is, because Vermonters are getting sick and tired of their own rural cuteness and besides, they take their primary seriously. Vermont has been producing quality primaries since 1976. To be sure, there were earlier primaries, in 1916 and 1920, but some jerk decided to hold them in the month of May, which is one of Vermont's 10 loveliest months, so no one showed up. March is an excellent month for a primary in Vermont, because March is the time of year when Vermonters decide that they've finally had it with New England, and apply for work in St. Pete. Were there not a town meeting in early March—and now a primary as well—the state would have been abandoned long ago, in which case New Hampshire would have moved in, in which case Vermont would have regrouped and attacked.

New Hampshire is central to Vermont's political history. Vermont has based several of its more important political decisions on those of its neighbor state. On an Exxon map the shapes of Vermont and New Hampshire appear to accommodate each other like a hug, but the companionability is purely cartographical. Vermont inevitably follows one of two rules in regard to New Hampshire: if New Hampshire does it, don't; or if New Hampshire does it, do, but for God's sake not like *that*. The latter was followed when the primary was established.

Early proponents of the Vermont primary had a rough time persuading their colleagues to go along. On April 8, 1975, an editorial in the *Burlington Free Press* complained: "This attempt to gain a little national publicity strikes us as being a bit childish. Let New Hampshire keep its claim to political fame; Vermonters have better things to do." That turned out not to be so. Though the proposal had been defeated the first time around in 1971, it passed in 1975, thanks to the relentless heroism of state senator William T. Doyle, who argued that Vermonters had as much right as anyone to get a firsthand look at presidential candidates. The issue was aided considerably by the testimony of Representative Norris Hoyt of Norwich: "Vermont is a much more moderate and much more sensible state than New Hampshire. I would rather have the people who are running for president come to a sensible state."

It should be noted that the word "sensible" in Vermont means "like a Vermonter." Therefore, everything is sensible in Vermont, but nothing is sensible

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anywhere else because nowhere else is like Vermont. That fact is central to an appreciation of the Vermont primary. The most important historical fact about Vermont is that it was never a colony. It has no trace of the colonial mentality. Nor, often, has it the mentality of a state. From 1782 to 1791, Congress adamantly refused to recognize Vermont as a state; and during those years Vermont had its own foreign policy, coined its own money, formed its own army, naturalized its own foreign citizens. It was a bona fide republic, and it continues to think like a republic.

In sum, Vermont decided to hold a presidential primary: (a) because primaries are supposed to represent the opinions of peculiar regions, and Vermont qualifies; (b) because *St. Alban's Daily Messenger* publisher William Loeb vehemently opposed the idea; and (c) because everyone was pretty sure that if they did hold a primary, nobody in the rest of the country would pay any attention to it, which meant that no Vermonter would have to dress up in overalls, or whip up stories like that of the salesman and the heifer.

Vermont's Governor Richard A. Snelling (Montpelier, February 28, 1980), after shaking my hand, told me that the media were responsible for the lack of substance in presidential primaries, and for the vacuousness of the candidates. He also suggested that all primaries are a crock.

There is some evidence, however, that the Vermont primary is the best there is. The supporting evidence:

There is no momentum in Vermont. If a candidate were said to be gaining momentum he would have had to do so in New Hampshire, therefore Vermont might deny him victory on those grounds alone. However, such a denial undoubtedly would be regarded as petty and reactive; therefore Vermont might vote for the candidate after all, allowing his momentum to increase. However, Vermonters don't like the idea of momentum because it sounds chic. But then Vermonters don't want to look like hayseeds. These elements cancel out.

There are no journalists in Vermont. There are Vermont's own journalists, of course, but they are called reporters, and unlike Washington or New York journalists, they have no social standing above the citizenry. These "reporters" also have no credit cards, and are not permitted to drink or stay overnight in hotels.

Governor Jerry Brown did not enter the Vermont primary. As a result, Linda Ronstadt, his friend, did not visit Vermont, and thus cause riotous gaping, gawking, ogling, and rubber-necking.

The Vermont primary has a perfect record. In 1976, Vermont's winners were Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. Ford's chances were enhanced by the fact that Ronald Reagan didn't enter, and Carter's by the fact that his main opponent was Sargent Shriver. Nevertheless, the winner in know-nothing Massachusetts was Henry Jackson.

Because the Vermont primary is non-binding, and because Jerry Brown did not enter, it seemed possible that Brown would win the majority of delegates. On the other hand, Vermonters do not like the idea that Brown did not think enough of Vermont to drop by. On the other hand, Phil Crane dropped by more than any other candidate. And of course Carter never dropped by. All of which suggested that Carter would win big, and that Crane would not.

As for Brown, it is mystifying why he did not enter here. The entrance fee is $1000 (well, maybe he's out of money). However, if there was one primary where Brown stood a chance it was Vermont's. Perhaps he's just being perverse in order to play up to a perverse state, but Vermonters regard anything as perverse that is more perverse than they.

The toss-up seemed to be between Bush and Reagan. Bush was said to have the better state organization, but there was a prevalent feeling that Bush was just a younger copy of Reagan; and if that was so, why not have the old Reagan? To his credit, Bush is a Yankee, but not a Vermonter, so he was no more appealing to Vermonters than a New Hampshireman would be. Reagan had a better comic delivery than Bush, and he had only recently made a good joke about Jerry Ford's golf game.

But by a long shot the most popular candidate in Vermont was John Anderson. Nobody knew a thing about him, but everyone admired his directness.

As Vermont goes, so goes Ohio. That was last demonstrated in 1896, when William McKinley's majority in Vermont was so great that 100 Vermonters marched from St. Alban's to Canton, Ohio to present Mrs. McKinley with a case of Vermont butter molded into the shape of a cross. Whether another hundred Vermonters would march to California for Reagan is doubtful; and the butter would not last, in any case. But the cross Vermont Republicans have to bear this year is that they've effectively chosen three men for the job.

Of those three the most elated is John Anderson, and for good reason. For weeks he has been calling himself "the only alternative to Ronald Reagan," and if one excludes suicide, Anderson seems to fill the bill. Bush finished third in Vermont, and he might have finished higher had he stopped calling Anderson "not a worthy candidate," thereby generating the infamous Vermont backlash. Of course, Bush did better in Massachusetts, but that's because he was born in Massachusetts. To be born in Massachusetts is, in Massachusetts, a virtue, which accounts for Kennedy's impressive victory there as well as for his even more impressive defeat in Vermont.

That Carter won over Kennedy by three to one is the second most significant factor in the Vermont primary. It means that Vermonters dislike Kennedy three times more than they dislike Carter. That goes poorly for Kennedy because Vermonters do not like Carter at all. They would like to have believed Carter when he said that he was too busy saving the world to visit

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Burlington, but when it comes to fertilizer, Vermonters are just country boys themselves.

All of which brings us back to Anderson, whose performance was the first most significant factor in the primary. In fact, when the votes are counted and recounted it may turn out that Anderson actually won. To have won the Vermont primary would be an astonishing victory for Anderson. All he would need to do then would be to go out and find another state like Vermont. Unfortunately, that is out of the question.

Roger Rosenblatt

Roger Rosenblatt, former literary editor of *The New Republic*, lives in Vermont.

Bogged-down diplomacy.

The French Disconnection

by Tad Szulc

"The Chief of State does not polemize with ambassadors," President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing said the other day, thereby dismissing a comment by the American envoy in Paris that it would be "neutralist nonsense" for France to search for a "new way" between the US and the Soviet Union. Giscard's contemptuous putdown, following the rather undiplomatic public warning by US ambassador Arthur A. Hartman to the French "not to forget the side you're on," suggests the appalling state to which Franco-American relations have sunk in the aftermath of the Afghanistan crisis, a condition for which both countries share roughly equal blame.

The fundamental differences between the US and France over policies toward the Soviet Union raise disturbing questions concerning the political resilience of the Atlantic alliance, going far beyond the absurd diplomatic imbroglios involving Washington and Paris in the last two months. Not only are the US and France unpleasantly at odds at a time when the Soviets are engaging in expansionism, but West Germany and the US are also unhappy with each other (something President Carter and Chancellor Schmidt sought to remedy in Washington last week). And, to compound matters, the French and the British are bogging down in harsh disagreements over everything from Afghanistan to Common Market problems. The alliance may thus be in danger of becoming divided politically into US-British and French-German camps, if common sense and mutual interests do not prevail.

It is, however, the clash involving France and the US that hurts the alliance most. US-French relations are probably at the lowest ebb since General de Gaulle removed France from NATO's peacetime military framework in the 1960s, and they worsen every day.

At this point the problem transcends intellectual or tactical considerations: the US resents the French for preventing the achievement of allied unity it thinks should exist according to *its* prescription in the face of the Soviet Union, and Giscard is angry at Carter for trying to push him into "bloc-to-bloc" confrontations (a sentiment shared quietly by many other NATO allies).

Even when the US and France appear to agree on a concept, they cannot agree on its execution. They share, for example, the view that a neutral, non-aligned Afghanistan is desirable. But the Americans want the Russians to get out first—Vance again affirmed the toughness of the US stand on March 3—whereas the French still think such a deal can be cut as a prerequisite for withdrawal. Although most independent observers doubt that either approach is really workable, the American and French positions now are set in concrete, which says little of an encouraging nature about the management of diplomacy between allies.

To the extent that the French stance can be described in general terms, three points stand out:

—France's obsessive and traditional insistence on an "independent" foreign policy. As Giscard explained in a television interview on February 26, France considers herself a member of the Atlantic alliance, but she will pursue an independent policy and "neither pressure nor intimidation will make us change this course." Thus Giscard emphasized that there are numerous independent policies in the world, noting pointedly that this included West Germany, which "in certain respects has taken an attitude close to ours."

—France's desire for Europe to play a worldwide role, a role that Giscard said existed before World War II, and must now be regained. This is another form of asserting independence from the United States though

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retaining alliance ties. France clearly wishes to be instrumental in such an evolution.

—France's dedication to detente, politically and economically. Giscard's view is that Afghanistan should not be allowed to destroy detente (the US claims Moscow has undermined it with the December invasion), and that contacts must be preserved. The French intend to maintain trade with the Russians as well as a political dialogue. Thus Soviet deputy foreign minister Georgi M. Kornienko visited Paris last January 5, Giscard and Brezhnev have been exchanging confidential letters, a French trade mission went to Moscow last month, and the secretary-general of the French Foreign Ministry, Brunot de Leusse, is to go to Moscow in mid-March. The French say they keep pressing the Soviets to set a date for military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The US evidently takes a dim view of the overall French attitude, understanding the political realities of France as little as Paris understands the American realities. The confusion began, oddly, with a joint communiqué issued by Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt at the end of their conference in Paris on February 5, describing the Afghanistan invasion as "unacceptable." But several hours later, Giscard inexplicably told newsmen that France would not be drawn into "bloc-to-bloc" confrontations. From then on, as a senior European diplomat here remarked, he has been "back-pedalling" from the position he had taken with Schmidt. French commentators concluded that Giscard had suddenly realized that the joint statement might be construed as putting him squarely in the US camp against the Soviet Union, and damage his "independent" posture.

Two days later, on February 7, Paris heard that the West German ambassador in the US had said in a newspaper interview that joint allied consultations on Afghanistan would be held in Bonn during Vance's visit on February 20. France, which said she had not been consulted, exploded in rage, and the government announced it would not participate in such "bloc" actions. Indeed, the US neglected to consult the French—for reasons that remain unclear.

That same evening, French prime minister Raymond Barre arrived in New York for a longstanding speaking engagement. French diplomats, sensing that the crisis with the US was getting out of hand, hinted to the State Department that Barre would be receptive to a high-level invitation to Washington or to a meeting in New York. Such a meeting, they thought, could clear up the misunderstanding. There was no US response, however, and Barre flew home on the evening of February 9, considerably annoyed.

Though the allied meeting in Bonn had been rendered impossible by the French, Vance resolved to go to West Germany anyway, and to visit other European capitals. But until the last moment, it was unclear whether he would stop in Paris. Meanwhile Franco-American diplomacy kept breaking down.

drawing by Vint Lawrence

On February 20, the eve of Vance's arrival in Paris from Bonn, Ambassador Hartman delivered a speech before the American Club, alluding to "neutralist nonsense" by those advocating a new way for France "between the two superpowers." This was a clash of surrogates. Hartman, who is highly respected in Paris, was replying—on instructions from Washington—to an earlier speech by Michel Poniatowski, one of Giscard's closest associates and a former interior minister, propounding that France and other Western European powers stay out of Soviet-American disputes, proceed with independent policies, and create their own nuclear deterrent force. French observers along with the Carter administration concluded that Poniatowski was, in effect, speaking for Giscard. Hartman was thus instructed to hit back with one of the toughest public criticisms of French policies in many years. Nobody in Washington has been willing to

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explain what was to be gained by this gesture, particularly just before Vance's meeting in Paris with Foreign Minister Jean François-Poncet.

The February 21 session between the two men failed to resolve the basic impasse. On February 26, Giscard granted the lengthy interview to French television, cutting down Hartman, and reaffirming with added strength the independence of his foreign policy.

While the Franco-American stalemate continued over allied attitudes toward the Soviet Union, Giscard flew to the Persian Gulf and the Middle East on a state tour. On March 2, apparently oblivious of US sensitivities, he found it necessary to issue a joint statement with Kuwait calling for "self-determination" for Palestinians. Although this is a standard French position, Giscard's timing was disastrous from the viewpoint of relations with the US, which of course is engaged in delicate negotiations with Egypt and Israel over the future of the West Bank and Gaza.

It is a matter conjecture as to where the Franco-American relationship may go from this point. What is clear, however, is that Paris and Washington, each for its peculiar foolish reasons, have contrived to weaken the Atlantic alliance at the most dangerous moment in international relations. Clemenceau might have said that diplomacy is too serious a business to be left to diplomats.

France's Madonna Complex

In taking her "independent" course in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, France is behaving to her friends and allies with less consideration and more chauvinism than is usual even for her. Never have the most Francophile of one's acquaintances had less to say in defense of their mistress. Her conduct may not seem to matter all that much, and be more of a nuisance than a danger (the world is well used to her bad behavior). But when the only alliance of free nations in the world should be pulling together, and be perceived as doing so, the words and deeds of French leaders have succeeded only in making the allies' intentions and actions appear as confused and irresolute as ever. It is hard enough anyhow to get the Western European nations to accept either their individual or collective responsibilities; and difficulties that are added by France's egotistical posturing now call for some deliberate response from her friends.

Much of the behavior of France can always be explained by our own attitude toward her. Few among us do not have some memory of France—or even just an image, if we have not been there—which could have been inspired by no other country. It is an impression made, usually, by the lightest touch. It does not matter that France has waged more wars of brutal conquest than any other nation in the West, that her people are capable of the grossest inhumanities (then of a callous indifference to them), that in spite of their cultivation of manners they behave like pigs even to one another, that they are shifty, unreliable, shallow, vain, and given more often to cowardice than to the displays of gallantry that infest their own legends. We still think of France as "the princess in the fairy tales or the Madonna in the frescoes" of de Gaulle's imagining, and believe that she is as without fear and without reproach as the chevalier Bayard.

France's hold on our sensibilities may be no more than "a passing light, a mere intangible," but it is no less real for that. It is at moments such as this that we should remind ourselves that historically France—with rare and usually brief exceptions—has been selfish and untrustworthy. The French are so capable of self-deception that it is hard for them to see the reality of their situation. France's allies need to understand that, whatever the immediate explanations of her conduct, there are others that run deeper, part of the historical character of the nation.

As far back as the 13th century, when France appeared to be the strongest power in Western Europe, its reputation amounted to the hollowest of facades, resting only on the splendor of the French court and its princes. It was no different in the reign of Louis XIV, when the court of *le roi soleil* dazzled the rest of Europe; Louis suffered four defeats at the hands of Marlborough while the court squandered the country's treasure. The 18th century still is regarded in legend as the great epoch of France, yet she lost her empire to England. "The time seems to have come," said Antoine de Rivarol in 1784, "when we can speak of a French world just as we spoke of the Roman world." Five years later the nation fell into the pit of the revolution. In the 19th century France marched with Napoleon to an inglorious catastrophe; the ambitions of Napoleon III led only to another revolution; and in 1870 France collapsed in a few weeks before the armies of Germany. In the 1914-18 war she was saved from a further defeat only by her allies (in what was meant to be her own war of revenge), and 25 years later she made an abject surrender to the armies of Hitler.

This succession of humiliations still weighs on France, and accounts for her posturings and her pique and her yearning with de Gaulle and even now for grandeur. Her allies have to understand that French nationalism, as it is now exhibited, is not a reasonable force as it is in most other nations. Not only should France's allies refuse to bend all their efforts to accommodate her, they should take counsel among themselves to anticipate her almost certain attempts at disruption, her habitual repudiation of agreements made only yesterday. France's subliminal effort is to relive the legend of her epic past as a *chanson de geste*.

Hence the Gaullist belief that France should and can have a special relationship with Russia, her stance apart from the military structure of NATO, and her

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continual bedeviling of almost every effort for united action by the European community. Selfish and intransigent, France has made a poor contribution to the European Economic Community budget, despite her own prosperity, has made no effort to ease the way of poorer countries to join the European Monetary System, and has flouted the rules of the Common Market—as in her ban on the imports of lamb from Britain. When at the beginning of February she undermined the agreement with the United States, West Germany, France, and Italy to take a common stand against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and coordinate the Western response, she was behaving as usual; her allies need to be much clearer in binding her to some decent observance of her responsibilities.

This is all the more important because there is no such thing as a public opinion in France capable of bringing its own sense of reality to bear on successive governments. The French public never has been more divorced from the governmental process. It is well fed, manipulated, and kept silent. For its good cheer it is allowed to watch endless bicycle races on the government-controlled television; that is the kind of participation the state encourages. So government continues without it, except when the French are provoked to take to the streets as in 1968, and so does the shuffling of the parties.

Both the Gaullists and the Communists fall back on the nationalism that was nurtured by de Gaulle, at the core of which stands the idle pretense that France can pursue an independent foreign policy by reaching to Russia. Giscard d'Estaing in the middle throws pro-Russian bones to them. But contrary sentiment is there. The Socialists will no longer cooperate with the Communists after the invasion of Afghanistan; and though the Gaullist leader in the National Assembly protested the banishment of Andrei Sakharov, there still is no public opinion to give the Gaullists the nerve to lead. Never has the dominance of the state in French life had so debilitating an effect. Her allies are confronted again with an historical phenomenon which they cannot just ignore or hope to appease. This is France as France will ever be.

"If one wanted to pile up what every nation has spend in blood and gold and efforts of all kinds for disinterested aims which were of benefit to the world," said the historian Jules Michelet, "the French pyramid would rise to the sky." France's allies are too inclined to go along with this self-deception, and even agree with Péguy that "With all their faults God loves the French best." There may be no harm in this; France is hard not to love. But that is no reason why her allies should also abandon all political judgment in their dealings with her. France ought to be made to pay a penalty for her present conduct.

"The French are irritable, envious, jealous, and proud to excess," said Bismarck; she otherwise has been the madonna of de Gaulle. Allow her all her other claims, allow that she can always touch us like a breath on the cheek, but never forget that politically she is a nuisance and in the end has always been a danger.

Henry Fairlie

Detroit can take its lumps.

The Import Invasion

by Stephen Chapman

Barely had Congress approved a $1.5 billion loan guarantee for Chrysler Corporation when the news arrived that yet another American automaker was in trouble. Three weeks ago Ford Motor Company announced that it lost $41 million in the final quarter of 1979, its first net loss since the disastrous recession of of 1974-75. But things are worse than they appear. On its North American operations, Ford lost $273 million; only healthy profits from overseas kept the deficit relatively small. And industry experts say that when profits from its parts sales, its financial subsidiary, and other business interests are excluded, Ford lost one billion dollars or more last year making cars and trucks in North America. Chrysler, for comparison's sake, lost $1.1 billion last year.

Ford, however, is not on the verge of a collapse. It has some very profitable overseas operations, unlike Chrysler. Here at home Ford runs a distant second to General Motors, but in the rest of the world it is second to none. It is precisely in the rest of the world that the potential for growth is greatest, which is why Ford already has factories in Asia, Africa, and South America. Ford also is in much better financial shape than Chrysler. It boasts a Triple-A bond rating, meaning it should have no trouble borrowing to get through the current troubles, and it has large cash reserves.

But Ford does have problems, and they are not likely to get better right away. Some of its problems mirror those of the US industry. Last year's gasoline shortage hurt all the American carmakers, who found demand for big cars plummeting and the demand for small ones soaring. The result was that American consumers turned to imports for better gas mileage, leaving American companies stuck with big inventories of gas-

(continued on page 22)

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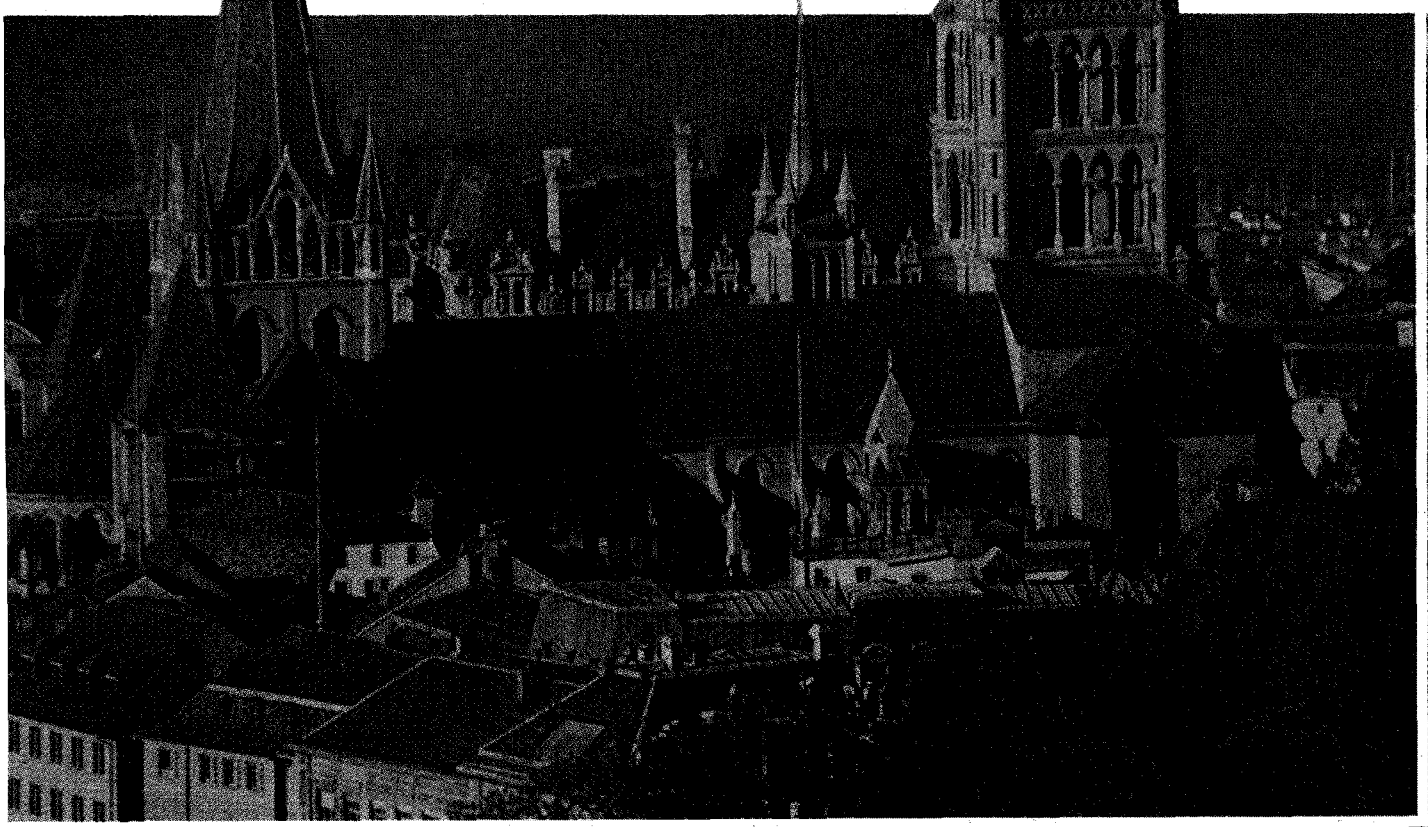
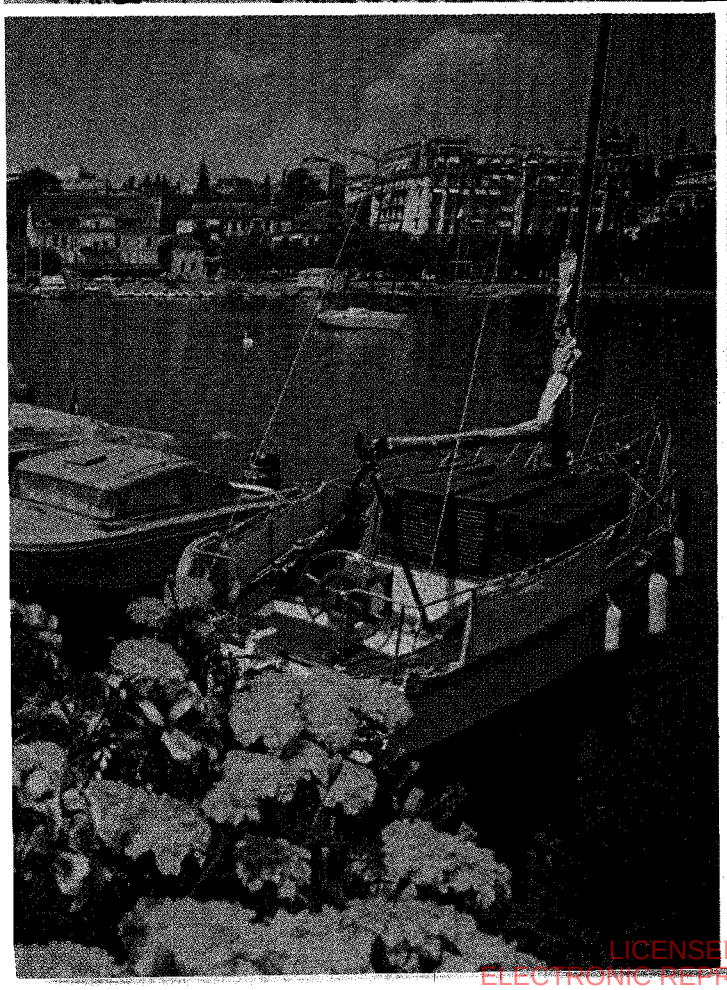
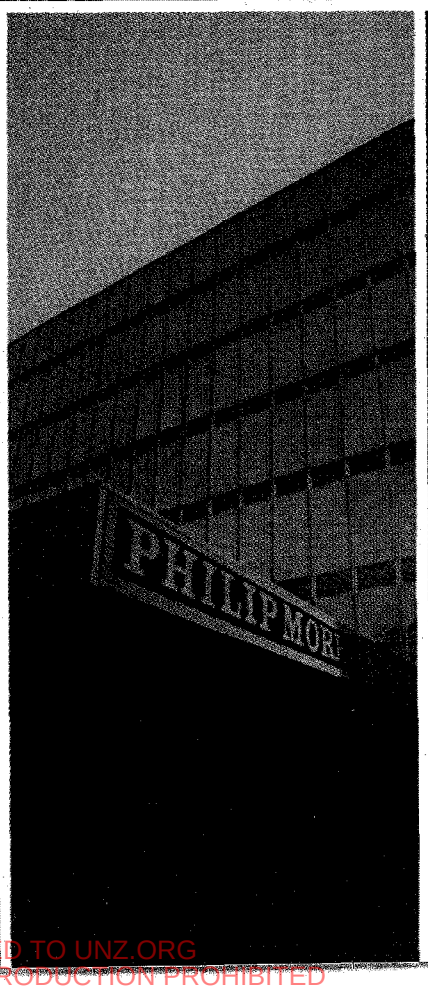
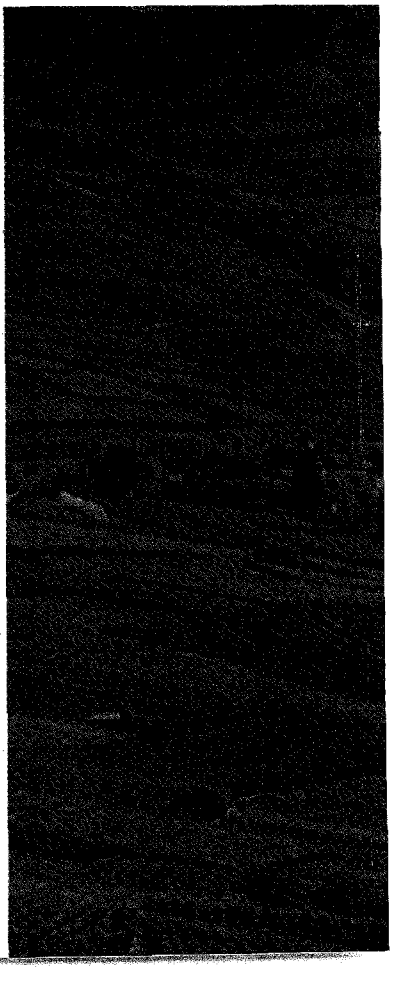
This is one of our hometowns: Lausanne, Switzerlanc

Lausanne brin









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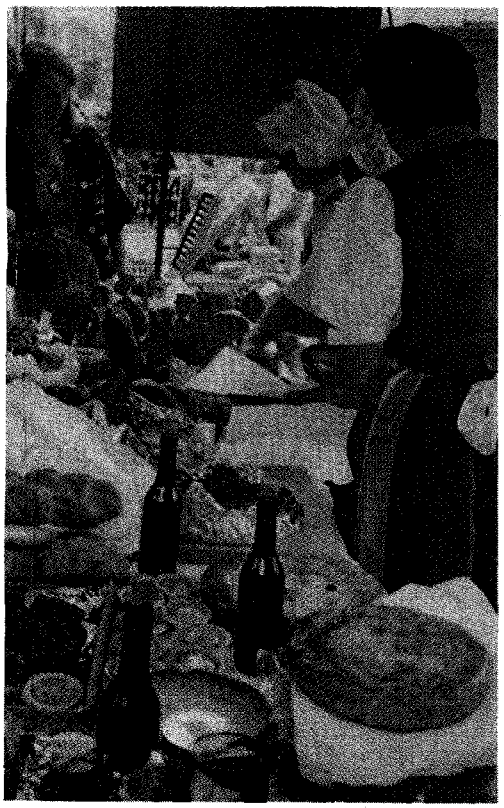
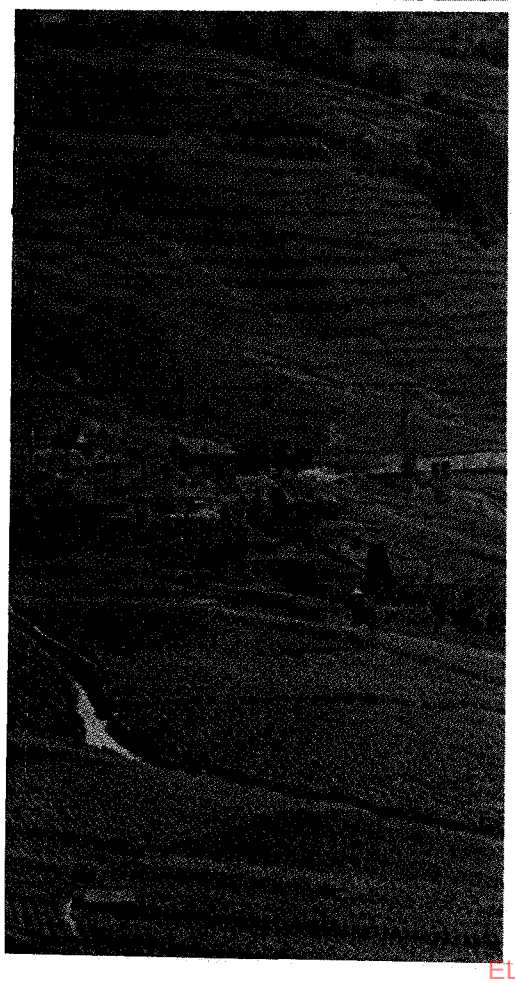
gs it all together.





It was here that the Celts brought together Western Europe's first great culture. The Romans came and made it an international crossroads. The Middle Ages left its faith in the soaring arches of the 700-year-old Cathedral. And all of it lives here still.

The Lausannois have lost nothing that they liked in all their millenia of living here. Whatever pleased them, however contradictory, they kept and molded into something uniquely their own: Celtic hospitality, Roman internationalism, medieval pageantry and modern functionalism. The terraced cobblestone streets live comfortably with modern highways that bring travelers from all of Europe, and outdoor markets not much changed from the Middle Ages survive compatibly with modern markets of banking, finance and international trade.

It is a city that unites, a crossroads that brings people and ideas together—for international businessmen and pleasure-seeking tourists alike. Hotel keepers from around the world come here to study the distinctive Lausanne art of making the traveler welcome—and find, to their dismay, that part of the magic lies in the incomparable setting of vineyard-clad hills sloping down to serene blue lake (Lac Léman to the Lausannois, never Lake Geneva) and the towering Alps beyond.

It is a city that helps us to bring together our flourishing business in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and where we've maintained one of our major international headquarters for the past 16 years. Like all the Lausannois, we find it a great place to do business and a great place to live. And if you can't do either, we know you'll find it a great place to visit.

Philip Morris Incorporated

Good people make good things.

Makers of Marlboro, Benson & Hedges 100's, Merit, Parliament Lights, Virginia Slims and Multifilter; Miller High Life Beer, Lite Beer and Löwenbräu Special and Dark Special Beer; 7 UP and Diet 7 UP.

Photographs by Marcel Imsand of Lausanne

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guzzlers. In 1978 imports accounted for only 17 percent of all new car sales, but last year that figure jumped to 23 percent. The gain naturally came at the expense of US firms. Even General Motors, which held on to nearly half of the American market, lost money selling cars in the US.

GM is better off than Ford not simply because it is bigger, but also because it has made some good decisions. The biggest automaker was introducing its new line of "X-cars"—high-mileage, front-wheel drive compacts—just as the gasoline shortage was starting to make the headlines last spring, and they have sold briskly. GM also decided to downsize its cars right after the 1973-74 Arab oil embargo. Ford, which got burned on its sales of Pintos and Mavericks after the embargo, when Americans went back to big cars, postponed downsizing until federal mileage regulations forced the changes. Its own front-wheel drive subcompact won't be on the market until next fall—a year and a half after GM went after the small car market.

But Ford's biggest problem is the same as that faced by General Motors and Chrysler. The dramatic shift in consumer preferences caused by the gasoline shortage and the sharp increase in gasoline prices, combined with increasingly stringent federal mileage and emission rules, have forced them all to invest huge sums to build smaller, more efficient vehicles. The US automakers will spend an estimated $80 billion on capital investment between 1978 and 1985—two to three times the amount normally budgeted. Ford president Philip Caldwell is exaggerating only a little when he calls the US industry's huge investment "the most massive and profound industrial revolution in peacetime history."

But trouble for American carmakers has meant prosperity for the Japanese. Makers of the world's cheapest and most fuel-efficient cars, the Japanese were in a perfect position to take advantage of the change in American buying habits wrought by the gasoline shortage. Japanese automakers sold more than two million vehicles here last year, nine percent more than in 1978. For several years small foreign cars had been steadily eroding the once-unassailable dominance of the Big Three, but the 1979 gas crunch gave them an especially big boost. Foreign cars now hold the second biggest share of the US market after GM. But it is the Japanese who have made the biggest gains. Toyota is third in the American market, trailing only GM and Ford. The Japanese account for more than four out of every five foreign cars sold in the US. These inroads are a recent development. In 1970, Japanese manufacturers sold a total of 323,000 cars here. Honda alone, which didn't even make cars until the late 1960s, shipped more cars than that to the US last year.

All this Japanese success and the current doldrums in the US industry—200,000 auto workers are now on indefinite layoff—have stirred up some protectionist sentiment, both in Congress and in the industry. Most of the noise has come from Douglas Fraser, head of the United Automobile Workers, who recently visited Japan to meet with executives of Toyota and Nissan (Datsun) to ask that they build plants in the US, as Volkswagen already has done and as Honda has promised to do. Earlier Fraser had said he would ask Congress to require the two companies to open plants here or else face new restrictions on their sales. "Because the Japanese refuse to exercise restraint, the time has come for us to force it on them," said Fraser. Apparently the Carter administration is sympathetic to Fraser's position, because its ambassador to Japan, Mike Mansfield, and its special trade representative, Reubin Askew, both have urged the Japanese to make investments in assembly plants here lest they provoke protectionist measures. "Any nation has to reserve to itself the means to prevent the flooding of its markets by imports," said Askew last November. One reason for this talk is that the US ran a deficit of $10 billion last year in its trade with Japan.

Not surprisingly, Ford, which has been particularly hurt by the success of the Japanese, has done nothing to discourage the growing anti-Japanese mood. One Ford executive has suggested a quota to reduce imports by 35 percent, and the company has suggested it may support Fraser's built-in-America proposal.

What is it the Japanese are guilty of? They have done nothing more than provide American consumers with reliable, fuel-efficient, and relatively inexpensive cars—at a time when the US industry has proved unable to meet the demand. Senator Don Riegle calls the surge of Japanese imports an "invasion" by automakers who "saturate the US auto market at cut-rate prices." But it is an unusual invader indeed who is welcomed with open arms by his supposed victims. A translation of Riegle's accusation: the Japanese carmakers are selling lots of cars here at prices consumers are happy to pay.

One rationale offered by Riegle for curbing Japanese imports is that the Japanese supposedly have trade barriers to keep out imports of American cars. For every American car we export to Japan, we import 100 Japanese vehicles. This is not necessarily because of trade barriers. The Japanese place no tariffs on cars imported from the US. Some critics in the American industry, however, complain that they impose so many regulations on imported cars that it is impossible to sell very many. There may be some truth in this accusation, but one should keep in mind that the Japanese auto companies also have to comply with US standards. The cost to American carmakers of meeting Japanese standards is much higher per car, because the Japanese market is too small so far to provide economies of scale. The Japanese mass-produce cars specifically for the American market; US firms build their cars according to US standards and modify them one car at a time. Sometimes they don't modify them very well. GM, for example, is trying to sell its subcompact Chevette in Japan, but it has kept the steering wheels on the left,

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even though the Japanese drive on the left side of the road.

Just because the Japanese export lots of cars to the US doesn't mean we need to import lots of cars to Japan in return. There is no point in the Japanese paying the extra cost of shipping American cars to Japan if they can make cars just as well at home. They have been able to surmount the cost of shipping overseas only because US carmakers haven't made the sorts of cars Americans want in the quantities they want. Right now the Japanese are better than we are at making cars. So we should buy their cars and concentrate on selling them something else that we're better at producing—such as agricultural products and computers. (It would help our trade balance and lighten our military burdens if the Japanese were to increase their own paltry spending on defense, which probably would require them to buy American-made weaponry.)

Any of the so-called solutions proposed above would be much worse than the ailment. Fraser's talk about voluntary restraint, an old favorite of American trade negotiators, is particularly silly. Asking the Japanese to limit their sales here voluntarily amounts to trying to get the effect of an import quota without actually enacting one. But to the extent that such restraint works like a quota, it is harmful. An import quota, whether accomplished through a "voluntary" agreement or through formal legislation, would hurt both consumers and the economy. It would reduce the supply of Japanese cars below the level of demand, making it impossible for some Americans to buy what they want. To those lucky enough to get the car they want, a quota would raise the price. Since Japanese carmakers and their dealers here would not be able to increase their revenues by selling more cars, they would do so by charging more for them. With this relief from price competition, US companies also might raise their prices. These effects will worsen inflation, leaving consumers of cars and other products worse off.

The country also will be worse off, since consumers who want Japanese cars would have to choose between buying American cars, many of which get lower mileage than Japanese cars, or else keeping their old cars, many of which also get lower mileage than Japanese cars. Reducing Japanese imports goes directly against the need to reduce gasoline consumption. It also makes no sense for the Federal Trade Commission to be conducting an antitrust investigation of US automakers even as Congress is talking about stifling one of their strongest competitors. One of the reasons Ford, GM, and Chrysler are spending so much money to retool their plants for smaller cars is that the success of foreign companies has forced them to do so. What Riegle, Fraser, and Ford propose is to punish the Japanese for making the kind of cars Americans increasingly want and to reward the Big Three for their tardiness in doing likewise.

Forcing Toyota and Nissan to build plants here, as the UAW recommends, would be more insidious but no less harmful. The biggest attraction of Toyotas and Datsuns is their relatively low prices, which are the result of the lower labor costs and higher worker productivity in the Japanese auto industry. American companies have preferred not to make small cars because they haven't figured out a way to make money on them. The Japanese make small cars because they do know how to make money on them. David Healy, a Wall Street financial analyst, says that wages in the Japanese auto industry are about a third of those in the US, and total labor costs only about half. The lower costs give the Japanese a cost advantage of several hundred dollars per car over US firms. That's why Toyota and Nissan can afford to build their cars in Japan and pay to ship them over here and still compete with American cars. To force them to build their cars over here most likely will raise their costs and thus the prices American consumers will have to pay. The UAW likes to cite Volkswagen's Pennsylvania factory as proof that the Japanese have no reason not to build here. What they neglect to mention is that labor costs in the West German auto industry are even higher than those in the US. Thus Volkswagen had a direct cost incentive to build here, which the Japanese do not.

The UAW's biggest concern of course is the plight of their workers, and rightly so. Unemployment in Michigan is now above 10 percent. But the UAW has already petitioned the Labor Department to certify all the GM and Ford workers laid off for special aid under the trade adjustment assistance law (some 35,000 Chrysler workers have already been certified). If the union can show that the layoffs in fact have been caused by competition from imports, the unemployed workers will be eligible to get 95 percent of their take-home pay for a year, 80 percent of any expenses incurred in looking for a new job or relocating, and free retraining benefits. If the Japanese are to blame for the layoffs, then the auto workers will be well protected.

What all the protectionist sentiment overlooks is that the current problems of Ford and the US industry as a whole are the product of sudden and unexpected changes, and are not likely to last very long. The Big Three all have plans to drastically expand production of small, high-mileage cars in the next two to three years—partly because of government regulations, but primarily because the competition from abroad has given them no choice. When those cars reach the market, the sales of imports probably will decline. But in the meantime the country would be better letting the US auto industry take its lumps. The Japanese automakers have helped American consumers, spurred competition in the American auto market, and contributed to reducing our consumption of oil. To penalize them for their success would aggravate inflation by raising the price of cars, reduce the incentives of US car makers to meet the needs of American buyers, and worsen our energy problems. Protectionism here makes less sense than anywhere.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Unwise Bloods

John Huston's career has been eclectically ambitious, in an idle way. He has taken on a number of good books, of widely different varieties, and has wrestled some of them on to the screen successfully: *The Maltese Falcon, The African Queen, The Treasure of the Sierra Madre,* and (a short story) *The Man Who Would Be King.* On the other hand, he had no hesitation in tackling such numbers as *The Red Badge of Courage, Moby-Dick,* and, if you please, *The Bible,* all of which failed. One of the better things to be said about him is that he has failed equally badly with dreck: *The Roots of Heaven, The Barbarian and the Geisha, The Unforgiven, The List of Adrian Messenger, Fat City.* A middleweight, it would seem.

Except that he has also had his failures in the middle ranges as well. Two of them were Southern Grotesque in provenance if not in setting: Williams's *The Night of the Iguana* and McCullers's *Reflections in a Golden Eye.* (But note that, in the last, Brando gave one of his best and least appreciated performances.) Now it's Southern Grotesque time again, and again Huston has fumbled.

Flannery O'Connor's novel *Wise Blood* is middling O'Connor, I think, far from the finest work by that often wonderful writer, but it's kept on a course of gravity, of taut contrast with a rational world and a healthy Christianity, by O'Connor's presence through her prose. The book is populated with distorted humans in baroque landscapes, but O'Connor's art manages, not easily, to keep it an agon instead of a freak show.

Huston was apparently unaware of this. Likewise his screenwriter, Benedict Fitzgerald. When Eric Rohmer made *The Marquise of O. . .* he evidently knew that he had to situate his film in a technique of composition which would reproduce in pure cinema the medium of Kleist's prose. But no such need ever crossed the Huston-Fitzgerald minds. They thought that (near) fidelity to the story and the dialogue would in itself recreate the book.

It doesn't, of course. What we get are the data of the book: a chamber of horrors and a mass of unexplained behavior. A few flashbacks, with some glimpses of Huston himself as the preaching grandfather, do not explain Hazel Motes's anti-clerical religiosity. (And Brad Dourif in the role doesn't explain Hazel's power over women.) Instead of a mad Protestant Stephen Dedalus with the cursed jesuit strain injected backward, this Hazel is only a horny and homicidal psychopath. O'Connor, in a note written 10 years after the book was first published, called Hazel "a Christian *malgré lui*" and said the book was "a comic novel." Neither point is made here.

Huston's direction shows no special fluency or ease. Gerry Fisher's cinematograpy—the pallidness deliberate, I suppose—makes the factitiousness more so. O'Connor wanted to show us one lode of the resident evangelical strain in American history. But Huston's film shows us only a South of nutty religious con men and their gulls.

Cruising, like *Wise Blood,* is another distorting exploitation of one portion of the American terrain. The line before the credits saying that this film doesn't intend to represent the whole homosexual world doesn't get *Cruising* off the hook any more than bloodbath gangster flicks of the 1930s were redeemed by law-and-order fadeouts.

Readers may remember that, when some of this film was being shot on location in Manhattan last year, several gay groups protested and wanted the shooting banned by the city. Even after seeing the film, which is at least as exploitative as was feared, I'm glad that prior restraint was not exercised. Censorious eras, like many in the past, prevent some films from being made, but a liberal era, like the present, evokes attempts at a different kind of censorship: various groups want their new liberties put under glass. Certain extremes excluded—Justice Holmes again, and his reminder that free speech doesn't give us the right to yell "Fire" in a crowded theater—those groups must take the burdens as well as the benefits of liberty.

The best way to censor *Cruising* is to stay away—advice that, according to *Variety,* is being riotously disregarded by thousands. However, for those mature viewers that the ads specify, there isn't much here. Al Pacino does a replay of *Serpico.* Instead of being a New York cop who goes underground to bust a drug ring, he's a New York cop who goes underground to find a murderer of gays; and he searches in "leather" bars. The only feebly interesting aspect of the script—adapted from a novel I will never read—is that the experience unsettles the demonstratedly heterosexual cop. We are left at the end with some heavy ambiguity.

Those who want to tour the S & M world of gays without leaving their theater seats will get their fill; the bus departs every two hours at your local theater. Pacino is around a lot, as usual

Films Worth Seeing

Angi Vera. Major theme transistorized into compact size. The corruption of truth into fealty, Hungary, 1948. Memorable.

Kramer vs. Kramer. American film acting at its current best. Thin script about custody fight between divorced parents.

The Left-Handed Woman. Peter Handke wrote the screenplay before the novel, now has directed it himself, with Edith Clever in the lead. A quietly resonant work of art.

Our Hitler: A Film from Germany. Special engagements. *Not a documentary.* A seven-hour set of film poems and dreams. Too long, sometimes ridiculous and reductive, mostly staggering.

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more palatable when scowling than when smiling. Paul Sorvino is Jewish in this one, at least by name. The only socially noteworthy matter in the film, for me, is the histrionism of the S & M gays. Each of them, as he lounges about a smoky dim bar in some sort of rig, waiting for an approach or an approachable, seems to be acting away like mad. These bank tellers and bus boys and lawyers by day seem to get as much pleasure out of the roles they play by night as out of the sex that follows.

Lina Wertmüller's new film *Blood Feud* is a serious mess—it messes with serious subjects—but it has one splendid double achievement. Sophia Loren gives one of her better performances, and she does it in a stunning new image created for her by Wertmüller and the latter's husband, the art director Enrico Job.

Wertmüller is once more in Sicily, this time around 1920. At the start Loren's husband, a free-speaking worker, is murdered at the orders of a rich oppressor. Loren spends much of the remaining film as a figure of vengeance. Her height is emphasized by a full-length black dress and a black shawl, she wears a frizzy wig, her eyes are circled in dark, and the shawl makes the most of her nose. Instead of trying to disguise the fact that her nose is curving slightly as she matures, Wertmüller-Job make the most of it. Loren looks sybilline, a column of stormy vengeance, a classic Fate in the form of a passionate woman.

But Wertmüller's script is as unfocused as some of her weaker efforts in the past—*Love and Anarchy, All Screwed Up*. Her subjects again are sex and politics, but Wertmüller doesn't really blend these two kinds of power drive, she merely turns from one to the other alternately, with some cumbersome plot mechanics. Marcello Mastroianni plays a socialist lawyer in a long graying beard, with somewhat less torpor than in his recent films but with nothing like the energy—or the developed characterization—of the socialist ex-professor in Monicelli's *The Organizer* (1963). Giancarlo Giannini gives us another helping of the pirouettes and attitudes from his Turkeycock Ballet. This time he's a Mafia man returned—temporarily, he thinks—from America. The film ends with the pregnant Loren cuddling the bodies of both men, both dying of gunshot wounds, whispering to each that he is the father of her child.

That makes the film sound much neater than it is. It's not even pleasantly pat: it's discursive and lumpy and enforced. Wertmüller has a fine cinematographer—Tonino Delli Colli (Pasolini's *Decameron*)—but she has chosen some settings that rather ostentatiously lay on the antiquity of the society: a Greek temple, a Roman amphitheater. And she quite baldly mimics the opening moment of *La Dolce Vita*: when Giannini drives in the first time, what we see first is a figure of the Madonna moving past the brow of the ridge next to the road. The effect is as strained and unconsummated as most of the picture.

But that image of Loren will remain.

The artist's real subject is freedom.

A Talk With Philip Guston

by Mark Stevens

In the 1950s, Philip Guston was a celebrated painter who was grouped with the founding members of abstract expressionism. His style was distinctive. He combined a seductive touch with a rough awkwardness of line and shape; the brushstrokes seemed to emerge almost hesitantly from the picture's background. The abstract Gustons of the 1950s remind me of the calloused farmer who, it turns out, knows and loves classical music. In the 1960s, Guston's style changed. He turned to representational imagery of an often brutal and visceral kind, portraying hooded figures, for example, which were drawn from his memory of the Los Angeles Ku Klux Klan of the 1930s. His generally pinkish palette—suggesting both blood and a pastel playfulness—compounded the unease of these pictures. Almost without exception, the critics disliked the new Gustons.

Since then, critical opinion has softened somewhat. His work has become important to large numbers of young painters, and a retrospective of his work will open at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in May. That exhibition probably will demonstrate that the late, outrageous Gustons are not so different in spirit from their predecessors. Like many American painters who found their stride in the late 1940s, Guston had not won an early success.

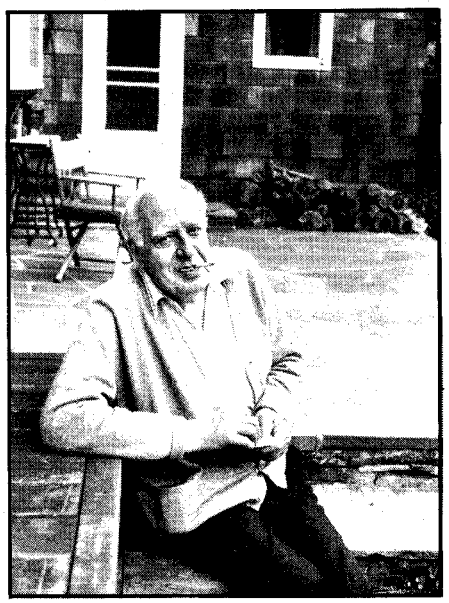

photo of Philip Guston by Renee McKee

He felt remote from the fashionable art of Europe. His figurative painting, no less than his earlier work, reflects a love for the naive which is close to the heart of much 20th-century art. Guston takes a kind of revenge upon fineness.

Guston, who is 66, never went to college and attended art school for only six months. During the Depression he worked for the WPA and in a factory, where he helped to organize a strike. He dislikes most recent art. His principal quarrel is with the reductive art of the 1960s. This art, which pays great respect to the physical facts of art, such as the flatness of a painting, claimed for itself the blessing of history. Guston is a well-read man who dislikes that kind of intellectual self-consciousness. When he showed me some pictures in his studio, I said he seemed to love the fantastic. He stewed over that.

Philip Guston: Fantastic? No, I don't think so. I like things rooted in the tangible world. I like old-fashioned things like gravity, how we locomote when we walk. I used to lie sideways on a

Mark Stevens is *Newsweek*'s art critic. This is the first of a series of interviews with contemporary artists that *TNR* will be running.

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park bench and watch how people walk. I used to think how amazing it is, the locomotion. I don't like "fantastic" when it means an overlabored use of the imagination. Anyway, all art is a kind of hallucination, but hallucination with work. Or dreaming with your eyes open.

Mark Stevens: You start your paintings with the most ordinary objects in mind.

Guston: It could be anything. A briefcase, or a bug crawling across the floor. Then I go on from there. I was thinking one night about Kafka's story "The Metamorphosis," when he wakes up and he's a bug and he's late for work. Well, I think the most fantastic thing about this story is that this man has not really changed. He's totally conscious, totally aware. There's no metamorphosis. I like Isaac Babel too because he deals totally with fact. There can be nothing more startling than a simple statement of fact, in a certain form. As Babel says, there's no iron that can enter the heart like a period in the right place.

Stevens: Or a brushstroke in the right place?

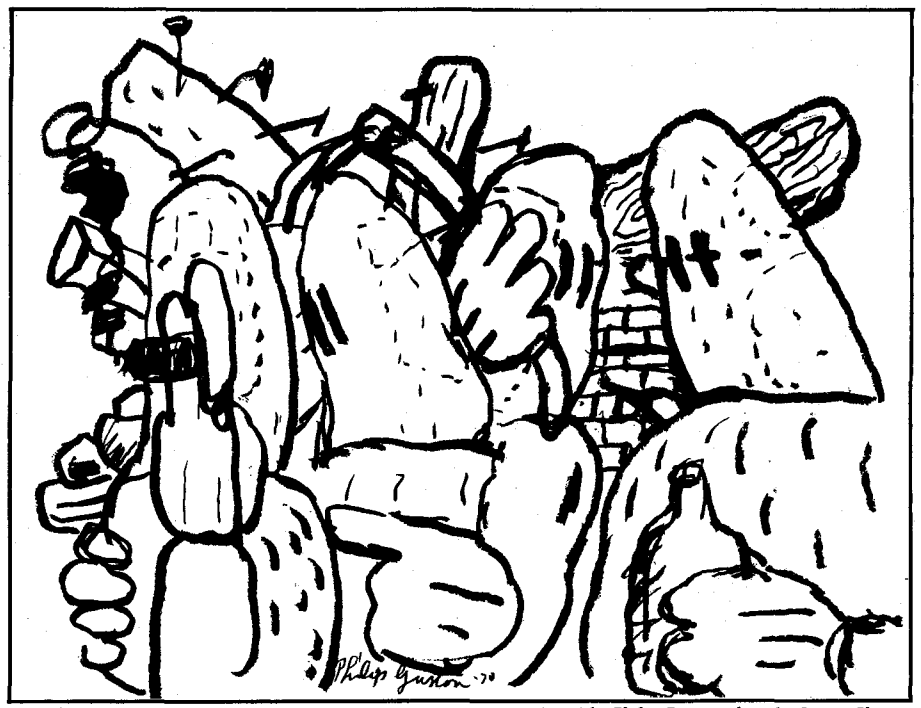
Guston: You sweat like a dog for that. In the beginning the canvas is empty, and you can do anything, and that's the most frightening experience. You have to get the white out of the way. As you progress in the picture, and it gets to where you're involved with an inch in . . . this rectangle which is your world, that's when you're most free.

Stevens: Then you find a sense of boundary or of control—a freedom from the anarchy of white?

Guston: You want to feel resistance. Or I want to. All my pictures must be fought for. Lots of overpainting and rubbing out. You want to have lived it. The complicated problem is when you do a painting that you think looks good. Then you go into the house and you go to sleep and you wake up in an hour convinced that you're kidding yourself. You haven't lived it yet. So without even looking at the picture you scrape the whole thing out and stay with it until—this is the mysterious part—you feel transparent.

Stevens: That reminds me of Stravinsky's famous remark, that he was the vessel through which *Sacré du Printemps* passed.

Guston: All artists have known that. When you look at paintings you can always tell which part is forced and which part is free.



"Fever" (1970) by Philip Guston, photo by Steven Sloman

Stevens: Is it grim work painting your more grisly images?

Guston: Someone once said to me "Doesn't this make you sad?" It doesn't at all. The important thing is you've let go of something inside, no matter what it is.

Stevens: You began your work as a figurative painter in the 1930s. Since then there have been two principal changes in your style—two hinges. The first was the turn to abstract expressionism in the late 1940s. The second was the return to figurative work in the 1960s. Could you explain some of the reasons you took up abstract expressionist painting?

Guston: I didn't take it up. I didn't join a club. "Abstract Expressionist" was a phrase coined much later. But in 1947 I became lost for about a year, because I felt I had exhausted my subject matter, which was a series of pictures about children. I didn't feel they were aesthetically felt—they were rhetorical. I was flattening out space at that point too. In 1948 I went to Italy for the first time, got to brooding and feeling that those artists were abstract in many ways. I decided to start from scratch when I got back. I also knew painters like Tomlin, De Kooning, Kline, Pollock from the WPA 1930s, and they all had the same problems. They wanted a new territory, to leave Cubist and semi-Cubist painting. We all gave each other moral support. Toward the end of the 1950s I was slowly evolving toward a different kind of figuration. Sort of black heads on fields of gray. Again I began to feel the necessity for a subject. It's a different contest when there's both subject and structure.

Stevens: You mentioned how important it is for you to "live" your paintings. Do you like Harold Rosenberg's definition of abstract expressionism as "action painting," an arena in which the artist acts out his . . .

Guston: I was never certain what it meant. It's so general. We argued about it for 20 years. Titian was an action painter. All painting is action painting. It's not an arena in which to act. Act what?

Stevens: He might have said, to try to act yourself, for a moment.

Guston: But that's been the story since the caveman, only the styles have changed. Besides, you don't know yourself when you're painting, and as for freeing the unconscious, all art's unconscious as well as conscious. What's meant by the unconscious anyway I don't know. I know less as I go along. Or more. Or simpler.

Stevens: In the mid-1960s you stopped producing your successful abstract works and did no painting at all. You just drew. What was going on?

Guston: It was clearing the decks. It was like starting again, like a child, just taking a very simple line.

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Stevens: Does that explain the extreme simplicity, almost crudeness, of those drawings?

Guston: Could be. It was a feeling I had, in about 1966: what would happen, I thought, if I eliminated everything except just raw feeling and the brush and ink, the simplest of means without even the seductions of color. It was like testing myself, to see what I am, what I can do. You see, at that point in the 1960s I wanted to be a stranger to myself.

Stevens: What did the critics say about the new figurative work?

Guston: For the most part, they said I was finished. I was through. The *New York Times* attacked the show—the headline was, I think, "From Mandarin to Stumblebum." Since then Dore Ashton has written a book about me, and a few others have written sympathetically. There seems to be about an eight- to 10-year lag. For a while I was with no gallery, but that made me feel good. Freedom is a marvelous thing. You know that old chestnut, that people are afraid to be free—well, it's true. When I had my first show in the new figurative style in about 1970 the people at the opening seemed shocked. Some painters of the abstract movement—my colleagues, friends, contemporaries—refused to talk to me. It was as if we'd worked so hard to establish the canons of a church and here I go upsetting it, forgetting that that's what good artists should do. At the opening only two painters, David Hare and Bill De Kooning, acted differently. It wasn't necessarily that they liked it. De Kooning said something else. He said, "Why are they all complaining about you making political art, all this talk? You know what your real subject is, it's about freedom, to be free, the artist's first duty."

Stevens: Your earlier success had become a kind of prison?

Guston: It was more that in working with subjects and tangible forms I was led into some surprising and unpredictable structures. That was exciting. Also, I began to discover that the art world in general is very conventional. They're just as conventional as the TV world, in that once you establish something, you're in a niche and that's that. My concept always has been that artists should change all the time because you feel differently all the time. Clement Greenberg once said that some artists, like De Kooning and me, were "homeless." He didn't mean it as a compliment but we accepted it as one.

Stevens: Have museums shown any interest in your figurative work?

Guston: Except for this coming show it stopped dead. I went through many years of there being no activity at all. That's why I taught.

Stevens: Do you read much art criticism?

Guston: Used to, but now I don't pay much attention to it. I gave all my art magazines away, and when I read criticism it's mostly literary criticism. In fact most of my friends are writers. I like their reactions to paintings. I like how they see.

Stevens: What's different about it?

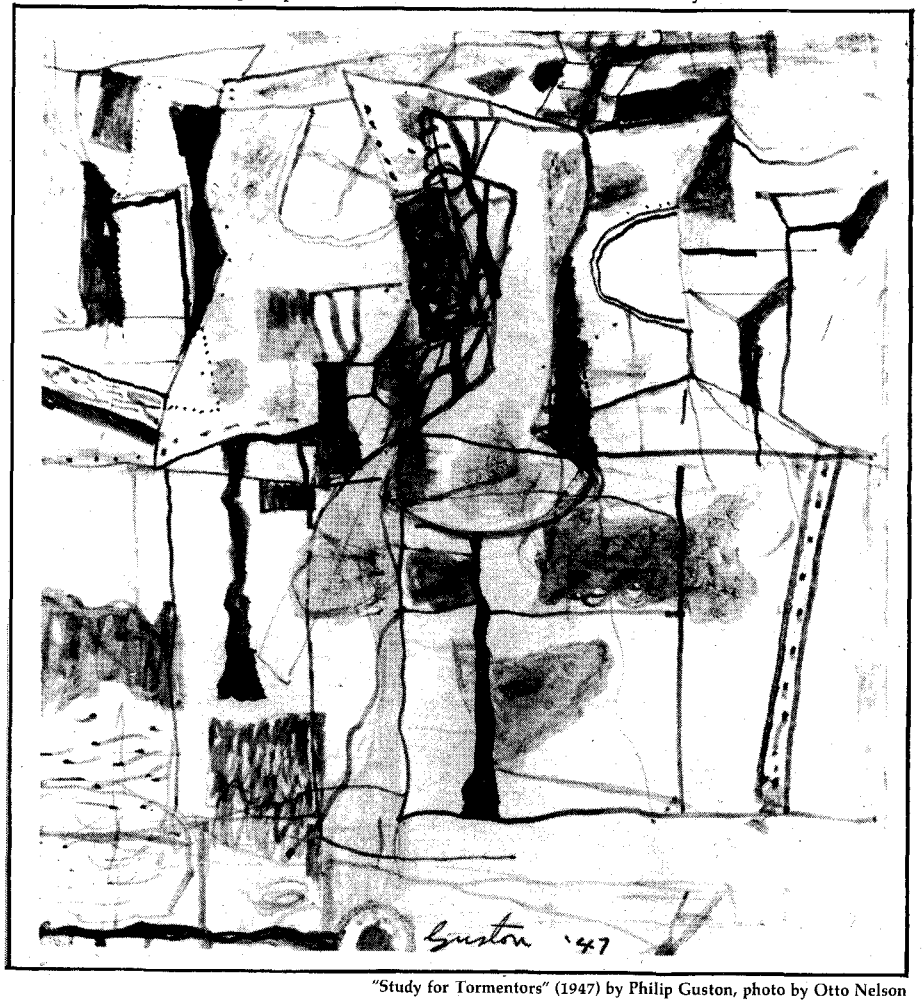
Guston: They see without the art world lingo. Sharply. Freshly. Sometimes they're funny, or their reaction is funny, and I enjoy that. I don't like writing that's snarled up. It's a cover-up. Good writing is simple. Meyer Schapiro last year sent me a pamphlet he wrote about Van Gogh and it's written very simply. T. S. Eliot takes complicated subjects in his essays and writes about them in the simplest way. You wonder, is the man's thought so clear he doesn't need to obfuscate it?

Stevens: Have you kept up with contemporary art?

Guston: I don't think contemporary American art is much worth talking about. It's college art. It's art that comes from being taught in colleges, in which you preconceive what it is you want to do and then you illustrate what it is you have preconceived. Totally mannerist. In the last several decades modern art has been degraded into ornament. It's too bad. It fits American society very well. In an office building you're not going to see one of my pictures on the wall, next to the plant, but you could put a picture of a few verticals and horizontals there. I prefer a more critical art.

Stevens: The term "avant-garde" doesn't mean much today.

Guston: The term "avant-garde" means money. It used to be—well, a military campaign would have an avant garde to smell out the enemy. Now it's the New



"Study for Tormentors" (1947) by Philip Guston, photo by Otto Nelson

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York Thruway. It's an accommodating art. If you have the proper writing, advertising, blurbs, you're set. The public behaves like the avant-garde now—it's only too anxious to be new. Actually I like Andy Warhol, because he takes all this foolishness and pushes it to the extreme.

What's wrong with modernism in painting is that it paints for this century. People see quickly today, so they paint so you can see it quickly. How often do you go into a museum and you see paintings that, so called, work within the limits? And your eye just bounces off. Anybody can go out and put down pretty colors, or smear around, or use a T-square. It's become attenuated finally, without the crudeness, guts, rawness, whatever you want to call it, when you really have to grapple with a subject. I think what Da Vinci wrote—that painting is a thing for the mind—is still true.

Stevens: But don't serious artists have to confront the formal ideas of their time? You might prefer your grandparents, but you are closer to your parents. Or at least since the Renaissance the way great individual artists have been able to find their own space—both formally and personally—is to explore, change, elaborate what's fresh in the art of their time.

Guston: I'm glad I'm working now. But the artists I admire were also great students of the past, you know. To my mind the beginnings of modern art are wonderful. Certainly Cézanne is the key figure, but you know he meant exactly what he said when he wrote that he was trying to do Poussin after nature, and he was a great student of El Greco, Tintoretto, Titian. Picasso, De Chirico, Léger, and Matisse carried on from there, and of course they also studied painting from the past. They had a subject and used objects. They really wanted to find out what it was about the old masters that made them so solid, and what gave them that particular quality of fluidity and solidity at the same time. That effort is exhilarating. I don't see much after Picasso and Léger, though. I used to like Miro for his playfulness, but you can get tired of playfulness too. Paul Klee, for instance. It's like this is humorous week, "let's be humorous."

Stevens: In the art world there's a pervasive sense that modernism has run its course. I don't know whether that's true, but what do you think is left for artists?

Guston: The rules of the game were established centuries ago. At the same time there is a problem, as you say, because there is no such a thing as modernism, and there are certain problems that we have that separate us from the past. There's no point in pretending you're walking down the streets of Florence in the 15th century.

Stevens: Certain formal problems? That's been the drift of criticism.

Guston: Our great problem is subject. What to do. How to begin. I'll sound moralistic: to do something worthwhile. Much modern art has only itself as a subject. I don't mean that it's abstract or not. I never felt that mattered. What could be more abstract than Goya? But a lot of contemporary art, whatever might be claimed for it, is made simply to create a pleasant environment.

Stevens: But that's also been a stimulus for the creation of some of the greatest art of the past.

Guston: No I don't think so. There was much more to consider in the art of the past. But the problem is deeper, this one of subject. It's a cultural and psychological problem for us. I don't know what the hell you do.

Stevens: A reductive artist might say he's dealing with pure questions of form and color—his subject is the meanings that are part of the nature of those things. Without the distraction of realistic images.

Guston: There's no such thing as pure manipulation of form or color. That's a myth. What's the difference between that and a sphere in Piero? The shibboleths of the last 50 years are amazing. But take an abstract painter like Mondrian. He's so good that when you go to the museum, and there's this picture and that and you see a Mondrian you go right to it. It's like a gun pointed at you. It's because he's passionate. He was a marvelous religious crank. He put his passion into forms. His passion for theosophy and art was a true subject. I think an artist has to reject all these shibboleths.

Stevens: In favor of what?

Guston: A lot of what's written and painted now is about there being nothing to write or paint, and it becomes boring after a while. I've always had the feeling that art is nourished by the common and ordinary. Picasso drew constantly from the common. I have a feeling that in America a lot of good art may come out of this impulse. I'm not talking about proletarian art, because that's as bad as being an aesthete. But I love the self-taught artists, like Pippin and Kane. Just as strong in my memory as the old masters is once seeing an old-fashioned ice-truck in Manhattan which had a bucket painted on it, with the grain of the wood and everything, and spilling out of it these cubes of ice. Sometimes, when my painting is getting too artistic, I'll say to myself, "What if the shoe salesman asked you to paint a shoe on his window?" Suddenly everything lightens. I feel not so responsible and paint directly what the thing is, including the necessary distortions. To put the question another way, I was once talking to Harold [Rosenberg] on a panel and I said "I'd like to paint as if I'd never painted or seen a painting before." Of course it's impossible. But Harold said that was Mallarmé's definition of the true poet: the poet in Eden.

The Dream of the Golden Mountains: Remembering the 1930s by Malcolm Cowley

(Viking; $14.95)

Malcolm Cowley, over almost half a century, has created a unique role for himself as chronicler from within of the contemporary American world of letters and the major stages it has passed through during his lifetime. The value and cogency of his successive chronicles—from the classic *Exile's Return* in 1934 to this arresting new memoir of the 1930s—derive in part from Cowley's personal experience of the human dramas, the anguish and the comedy, out of which literature arises. But they derive no less from his singularly acute

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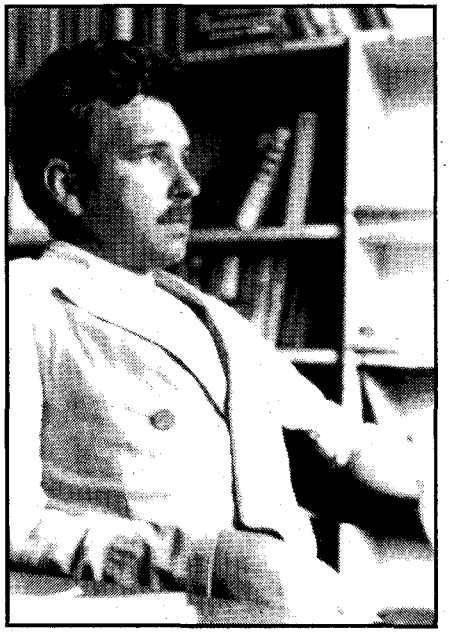
sense of what constitutes a literary generation. Speaking of the writers of the 1920s in *Exile's Return*, Cowley remarked that "they were a generation, and perhaps the first real one in the history of American literature"; something that led one caustically skeptical reviewer, Lewis Gannett, to snort with disdain. Cowley would no doubt repudiate the second part of his contention; he has since discovered, as he said in the stimulating lead chapter of *And I Worked at the Writer's Trade* a couple of years ago, that a series of distinguishable literary generations can be charted in this country starting at least as far back as the mid-19th century. But the analytic principle is a sound one.

It is also most appropriately American. American literature has customarily moved forward not by schools and manifestos, in the Gallic manner, but by generations; not by programs and assemblies, but by a sort of half-accidental simultaneity, at once nourishing and challenging. The irony is, though, that the 1930s generation explored in *The Dream of the Golden Mountains* is the one literary age in our annals that did attempt to launch itself by programs and multiply-signed statements; that held congresses, founded leagues, and formed international alliances. The aim of course was to enlist the sympathies and energies of American writers in the desperate conditions of the native working class, to summon them as witnesses to the collapse of the capitalist system and the eventual triumph—in what used to be called "the long view"—of the world-wide communist cause.

The conditions were indeed appalling, and the governmental actions—the routing of the threadbare bonus army by machine-gun squadrons and cavalry; the granting of $90 million not to the stricken city of Chicago, as its mayor requested, but to Chicago's leading bank—were so callous and outrageous that one can still grind one's teeth at Cowley's calm narrative of events. Yet as generations go, this one was relatively short-lived. Cowley's account begins just after the Wall Street crash in late 1929, when he joined the staff of *The New Republic*; and it ends in the first year or so of Roosevelt's second administration.

Cowley gained first-hand knowledge of the rapidly deteriorating state of the American outlands, the palpable threat of class war and a homegrown fascism, in visits to the Harlan County (Kentucky) mining district and elsewhere, in the company of potent literary spokesmen like Dreiser and Dos Passos. He absorbed a good deal more from his perch at *The New Republic* in Chelsea Square, New York. This was *The New Republic* of Bruce Bliven, managing editor; George Soule, the soft-spoken, scholarly economist; Stark Young, the drama critic; and Edmund Wilson, book reviewer and wandering recorder of the American jitters. The magazine's circulation could never be reckoned as more than about 5000; but in the 1930s *The New Republic* became the most important message-center—for political and economic inquiry, for theorists and fanatics, for troubled Americans and lively fast-talking foreigners—in the country. At the same time, Cowley, in intervals between collecting information and writing articles, was assailed on several sides by communist apocalyptics. And so, both horrified by what he had seen and read about and exhilarated by the visions he had been made privy to, Cowley allied himself in the spring of 1931 with the Communist party.



Malcolm Cowley

If he never formally joined the party, it was probably (Cowley now surmises) because the communist program had such an observably debilitating effect on the writers who actually espoused it. Cowley, already engaged in an ardent and long-enduring love affair with the English language, could not help noticing that the party leaders wrote atrociously. Beyond that, the kind of work they exhorted Americans to produce, in particular "the proletarian novel," was to be almost programmatically crude, formless, uncontaminated by bourgeois niceties of art. (In a telling analogy, Cowley compares this kind of thing to the didactic crudities of early Christian art.) What Cowley does not quite say is that in most instances it was also irrelevant: you can't have a proletarian novel if you don't have a proletariat to begin with.

The whole enterprise, in fact, went against the American literary grain, and this as much as anything helps account for the generation's brevity of tenure. Cowley and others like him (among whom I include my teenage self) were caught up in the dream of a genuinely better and more humane world far off in the golden mountains. It was an honorable and inspiriting dream—Cowley felt "full of humility, the desire to serve, and immense hopes for the future"—and nothing that befell it has made it vulnerable to derision; but this was not the way for writers to set about realizing it. It is not only that American writers, or the best of them, have never worked well in harness together, and have been congenitally uneasy with causes. It is also that the communist program for writers blinded them, for a period, to their real subject matter, what was really going on in the lives and minds of Americans, as well as to the source of Roosevelt's enormous popular appeal. Cowley is persuasive in explaining what at the time seemed to many of us baffling and vexatious: the failure of intellectuals by and large to appreciate the vigorous improvisations and artful zig-zagging of Roosevelt and the first New Deal; their dismissal of Roosevelt as the temporary prop of an incurably sagging capitalism. But Roosevelt was in touch with his country and the needs of his countrymen; the writers and intellectual *engagés* on the whole were not; and when the latter grew grudgingly or dishearteningly aware of it, the enterprise sputtered and subsided.

At one point, Cowley apologizes for a quite detailed digression into economic matters "in what started out as a literary memoir." The details are necessary to understand the barometric pressures of the age; but *The Dream of the Golden Mountains* is not lacking in the kind of personal and literary anecdote that Cowley handles so gracefully. There is a sad, retrospective glimpse of Hart Crane, off to Mexico to write "The Broken Tower," one of the great lyrics in the American canon, to enter into an intense affair with Cowley's former wife Peggy Baird, and to commit suicide. Dreiser is observed at a gathering in his studio, with "his scrubbed lobster-pink cheeks and his chins in retreating terraces," declaiming that "The time is ripe for American intellectuals to render

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some service to the American worker." Cowley describes a visit with Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald in 1933 at their home outside of Baltimore: Scott trying to pick a quarrel and then flashing "his bad-boyish smile"; Zelda's face emaciated and twitching, her skin weatherbeaten. There are pleasant encounters in Tennessee with Allen and Caroline Gordon Tate ("We'd like you to meet our Northern friend," the Tates would say cautiously, introducing Cowley to their neighbors). Kenneth Burke appears briefly, displaying his genius and his innocence in lecturing a largely communist audience about the need to apply middle-class values to the revolutionary effort. Burke is such good company that one wants to see more of him.

But another theme emerges, somewhat unexpectedly, to serve as a recurring counterpoint to the mixture of political and literary history. Let me call it the pastoral theme. Cowley confesses in the preface that in 1930 he was "still a country boy" ("the plowboy of the western world," the poet John Peale Bishop called him). Cowley empathized at a glance with the plight of the embattled Iowa farmers; and the one thing he liked about the New Deal was its conservationist policy—he found himself "mildly attracted to Roosevelt because he had planted trees and wanted to save the countryside."

The entire narrative is punctuated by a series of withdrawals into the rural. Cowley always writes an uncommonly agreeable prose, easy, lucid, slightly out of the corner of the mouth, but his prose rises toward the fabulous and the poetic when he goes back to the country. In Riverton, Connecticut, where he is finishing *Exile's Return*, Cowley walks 10 miles through the snow every afternoon, finding and mumbling aloud the words he will employ the next day; in the evening he stands at the bar of the little inn talking to two old men about the effect of the spring thaw upon the ice-scape—one of the men regularly recalling the spring of 1875 when the ice, "going out," had carried away the bridge, the other repeating, like the burden of a song, "I been here fifteen years and I ain't seen the ice go out but twice." And here is Cowley commuting back from New York to the Connecticut shore in the summer of 1935:

> Even the train ride to Niantic was magical, at dusk on a Thursday evening. I found a seat by the window, where I could look out at the shore. Between the ugly towns were flat salt marshes, pale green even in midsummer when most of the countryside was turning brown. Little islands of darker green rose out of the marshes; they were round clumps of oak trees growing on rocky soil, each island floating on its march against a background of gray-green twilight.

Karl Marx, it has been famously said, was not a country boy. In these periodic immersions in pastoral New England, Cowley seems to have found a way of being that touched his deepest chord, one to which the essentially urban Marxist vision never reached; and this may finally be why—along with those other and important literary considerations—he never could accept the communist creed. He did not abandon his social sympathies, but he stopped living there. Malcolm Cowley and his gifted wife Muriel came home for keeps at last, in the spring of 1936, when they brought seven acres and an empty barn in the little town of Sherman in western Connecticut. "There," Cowley says, "I could fish and hunt in season, grow a big garden, and still spend three days a week at *The New Republic* office." The poignant fading of the dream of the golden mountains was being somewhat mitigated by the reality of the green Connecticut hills and woodlands.

R.W.B. Lewis

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Slave and Citizen: The Life of Frederick Douglass
by Nathan I. Huggins
(Little, Brown; $9.95)

The Frederick Douglass Papers
Series One: Speeches, Debates and Interviews
Volume 1: 1841-46
edited by John W. Blassingame and associates
(Yale University Press; $35)

Moral Choices: Memory, Desire, and Imagination in Nineteenth-Century American Abolition
by Peter F. Walker
(Louisiana State University Press; $24.95)

Most of our greatest Afro-American leaders are readily identified with a specific setting or by a telling phrase. When one thinks of Booker T. Washington, there is an instant connection with Tuskeegee Institute and the Atlanta Compromise. W. E. B. DuBois suggests Atlanta University and the Talented Tenth. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is linked with Selma, Alabama, and nonviolent protest. But for Frederick Douglass no stereotypes come to mind; the name rings no reminiscent bells. Perhaps one thinks vaguely of a dingy inscription carved on a high school building in one of the more dilapidated sections of town. Douglass himself remains a blur, almost as out of focus as the few yellowing photographs of him that have been preserved.

The problem of identifying Douglass does not stem from inaccessibility of information. He published his own autobiography in no fewer than three versions, and the first of these, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845), was one of the most popular antislavery tracts ever written. Benjamin Quarles wrote a solid, careful biography of Douglass in 1948, and Philip S. Foner compiled the valuable four-volume *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass* (1950-55). Last year John W. Blassingame and his associates at Yale University completed the first volume of *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, an authoritative, handsome, and superbly edited collection of Douglass's speeches, debates, and interviews, and many more volumes are shortly to follow. Most recently Nathan I. Huggins, of Columbia University, has written a brief,

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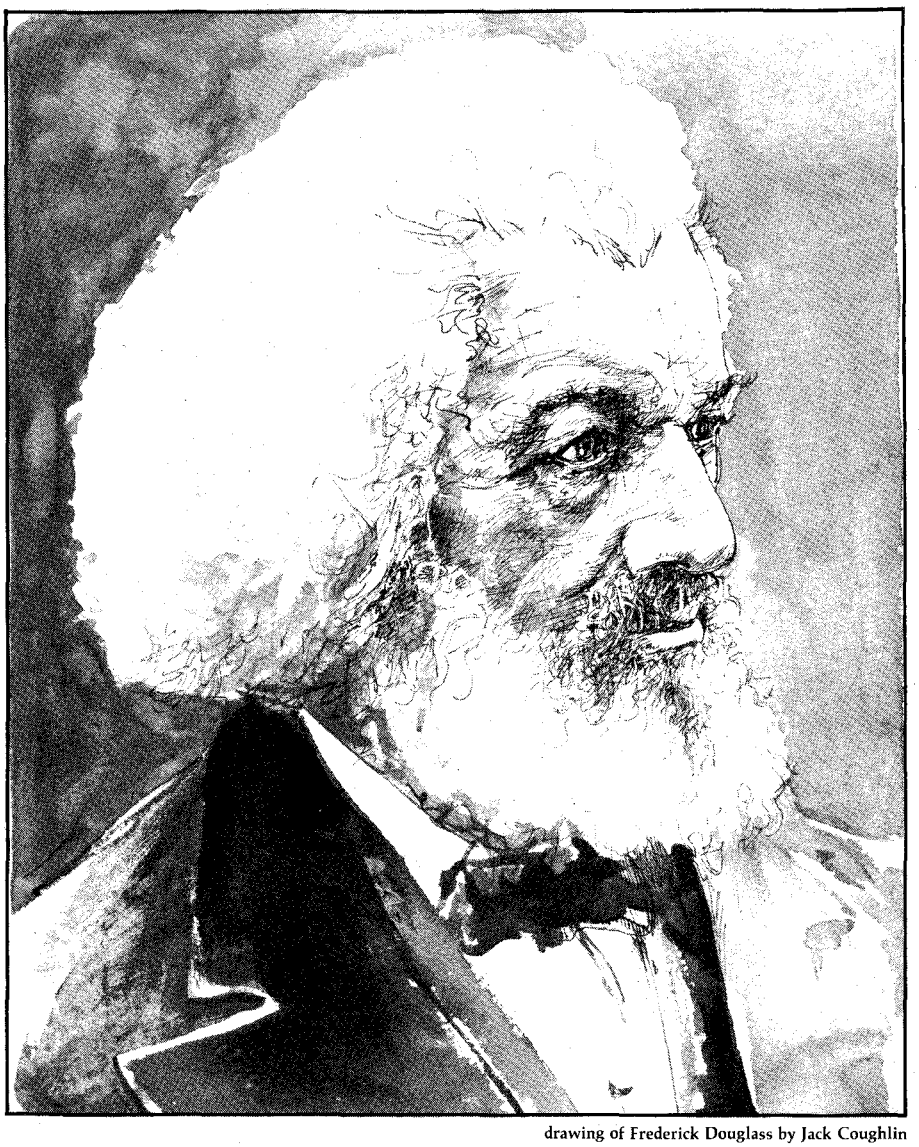
balanced, and beautifully organized biography, *Slave and Citizen*, a volume in Oscar Handlin's "Library of American Biography" series.

Nor does Douglass lack instant recognition because he was obscure. Indeed, as Blassingame says, he was "the representative black man of the nineteenth century"—representative not in the sense of typical or average but in the sense of having played nearly every role that was available to a black man of his generation. Born a slave in Maryland about 1817, Douglass escaped to freedom and became the most prominent black speaker in the abolitionist movement. Tall, broad-shouldered, and manly, he captivated audiences in England and America with his oratory. After breaking with the Garrisonians, Douglass moved in 1847 to Rochester, New York, where he edited the most influential black newspaper in the country, *The North Star*, dedicated not merely to abolition and the rights of free Negroes, but to women's rights, international peace, the homestead movement, and the abolition of capital punishment. A reluctant supporter of President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, Douglass did much to rally blacks to the Union cause and to encourage Afro-Americans to enlist in the federal armies. Firmly allied with the Radical Republicans after the war, he continued to be a conspicuous advocate of political equality for blacks. Given honorific but well-paid appointments by successive Republican presidents, Douglass in his final years muted his social criticism but, right up until his death in 1895, he never wavered in advancing his solution to racial problems: "let the nation try justice."

Perhaps the reason Frederick Douglass so easily drops from our minds is that, on first glance, the causes he espoused and the ideas he expressed seem so similar to those of other middle-class American reformers of his day. Reform for Douglass meant pushing off the road of progress the barriers placed there by prejudice and ignorance, so that each individual could freely advance himself. A man who had pulled himself up by his own exertions, Douglass had faith that others could do the same through hard work and self-education. It is not surprising that Douglass's most successful and most often repeated lecture was titled "Self-Made Men."

Since Douglass's own career, as Huggins observes, "was a breath-taking representation of the American dogma of human perfectibility," he saw no reason why other blacks could not follow his example. Afro-Americans did not need special treatment or fostering care from the government; all they required was an end to discriminatory statutes and the right to vote. After the Civil War when troubled whites asked, "What shall we do with the Negroes?" Douglass tartly replied: "Do nothing with them; mind your business, and let them mind theirs. Your *doing* with them is their greatest misfortune. They have been undone by your doings, and all they now ask and really have need of at your hands, is just to let them alone."



drawing of Frederick Douglass by Jack Coughlin

The stereotype of Douglass as a black Horatio Alger hero is one that he himself encouraged. Huggins astutely notes that, from his earliest appearance as an antislavery speaker, he "understood himself to be—both in his own view and that of those who looked on—a representative of his people." He was constantly on stage. Both his speeches and his letters, which Blassingame and his associates will be editing shortly, were designed to present a public facade.

But some recent studies suggest that Douglass was a more complex figure, deeply troubled over his racial identity. In *Moral Choices: Memory, Desire, and Imagination in Nineteenth-Century American Abolition*, a brilliant book that also deals with other antislavery leaders, Peter F. Walker charts Douglass's inner turbulence by a close textual analysis of his three autobiographies. The first version, published when Douglass thought the Garrisonians had accepted him as a man and a brother, minimized his black ancestry and announced flatly: "My father was a white man." Later discovering that the abolitionists thought of him not as an equal but as a prize exhibit—they urged him to use plantation language in his speeches and not to be too correct in his grammar—Douglass broke with them and forged ties with the black community. His autobiography written during these years (1855) stressed the role his black mother had played in his life and claimed that the identity of his father was "shrouded in a mystery." But in the final version,

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published in 1881, when Douglass was rich in possessions and honors and was ostensibly accepted in Washington official society, he once again reconsidered his heritage and, in ambiguous language, stressed his white blood.

Huggins's admirable biography shows that in other areas of life Douglass was also troubled, deeply confused, and sometimes self-contradictory. The evidence for such inner uncertainty can rarely be discovered in his speeches or letters, for during his early years as a slave Douglass had been compelled to learn to keep his emotions under strict control. But from time to time the public mask slipped, and Douglass revealed his inner turmoil through abrupt changes of course—from support of Garrisonian nonviolence to advocacy of force to end slavery, from denunciation of the Union to fierce national loyalty, from harsh criticism of Abraham Lincoln to posthumous deification of the Great Martyr of Freedom, from hostility to political action to comfortable office-holding. Even in his intimate domestic relations Douglass sometimes exhibited a divided self. Recognizing "only too well that his single best resource was an unblemished, exemplary character," Douglass, as Huggins notes, "never left himself open to charges of infidelity" during the long years of his first marriage to a black woman who was never his intellectual equal and who was always uncomfortable among his sophisticated friends. But after her death Douglass, at the age of 67, shocked many of his admirers by promptly remarrying, this time to a white Mount Holyoke graduate 21 years his junior.

Carefully read, Huggins's biography, Walker's analysis, and even the speeches Blassingame has edited give evidence of a persistent duality in Douglass. DuBois later wrote that every Afro-American combines in one body a "twoness—American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings." In Douglass this internal struggle was the more intense because he never permitted himself consciously to recognize it. Perhaps it was his insistence on an unblemished external facade that has made Douglass the least memorable of our great black leaders. By exploring the hidden complexities of Douglass's character, Walker and Huggins have done much to make him a believable man and to restore this greatest Afro-American of the anti-slavery era to his rightful place in our history.

David Herbert Donald

David Herbert Donald, chairman of the American Civilization Program at Harvard, is preparing a biography of Thomas Wolfe.

Conrad in the Nineteenth Century
by Ian Watt

(University of California Press; $21.50)

It says a great deal about this book that it was begun in 1955; scientists take that long on their researches but rarely, these days, literary men. We think of literary study not as a cumulative discipline in which knowledge accrues slowly, socially, in a kind of collective intellectual bank account, but as a more or less individual affair in which the critic's will to interpretative power over his author's texts—his drive to provide *the* reading for his generation—plays the dynamic role of social knowledge in the sciences. So far as we conceive of literary study in this way we are partly right, but as Ian Watt's exemplary new book suggests, we are also partly wrong.

The first in a two-volume work, Watt's study rests on the vast body of scholarship surrounding the life and work of Joseph Conrad. It is thus not only a better book—deeper, more comprehensive, infinitely more convincing—than the kind of thing a young professor works up to win a promotion. It is of a different order of achievement—the result of a career, not the beginning of one. At a cultural moment when the self-validating authority of ambition has won equal place with the communal authority of knowledge, it has an unusual integrity. To an uncanny degree it embodies the virtues of its subject's ethical vision: fidelity to a task, solidarity with a calling, subordination of personal will to the carrying out of an impersonal purpose.

By far the greatest part of the text is taken up with lengthy interpretative analyses of *Almayer's Folly*, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus,'* *Heart of Darkness*, and *Lord Jim*; but there are also brief glances at the other works Conrad produced from 1889, when he left the sea and began to write professionally, to 1900, when he had become a critically if not yet financially successful novelist. As one would expect from the author of *The Rise of the Novel*, Watt also places Conrad in the literary history of the 19th century; shows how his moral ideas no less than his technical innovations were concordant with the intellectual and artistic climate of his day. Finally, Professor Watt contributes a condensed but insightful account of Conrad's life during these years, and advances plausible and sometimes profound speculations about its connections with his art.

That Conrad's father, Apollo Korzeniowski, was a martyr in the hopeless struggle for Polish independence; that Conrad himself had to flee Poland to avoid a 25-year term of conscription in the army of the power then occupying his region of the country—that of the hated Russian czar; that, thereafter, he felt like an exile, a stranger, first in his brief sojourn in France, then during his 12 years in the British Merchant Service, and ultimately for the remaining 30 years of his life as a British novelist; that he spoke with a Polish accent, that Polish was the language of his delirium and perhaps of his dreams, that in such small things as diction and syntax and even spelling ("lenght," for example, was his way of rendering length) he remained ineradicably Polish, other, alien: all this is part of the common understanding of Conrad's singular career. The effects of this Polish inheritance on his work are central but contradictory. On the one hand, as Watt points out, it made for the old-fashioned note in Conrad: his emphasis on solidarity, for example, "may derive from a chivalric tradition of honor which had continued to animate the Polish nobility [Conrad's class] long after it had been replaced elsewhere." But in far larger part it made for Conrad's modernity, for our sense in reading him that he is one of us, that he had suffered his way to a complex understanding of the terrible insecurities of our century. In Watt's splendid formulation:

> The son of Apollo, the defeated orphan, the would-be suicide, the inheritor of the

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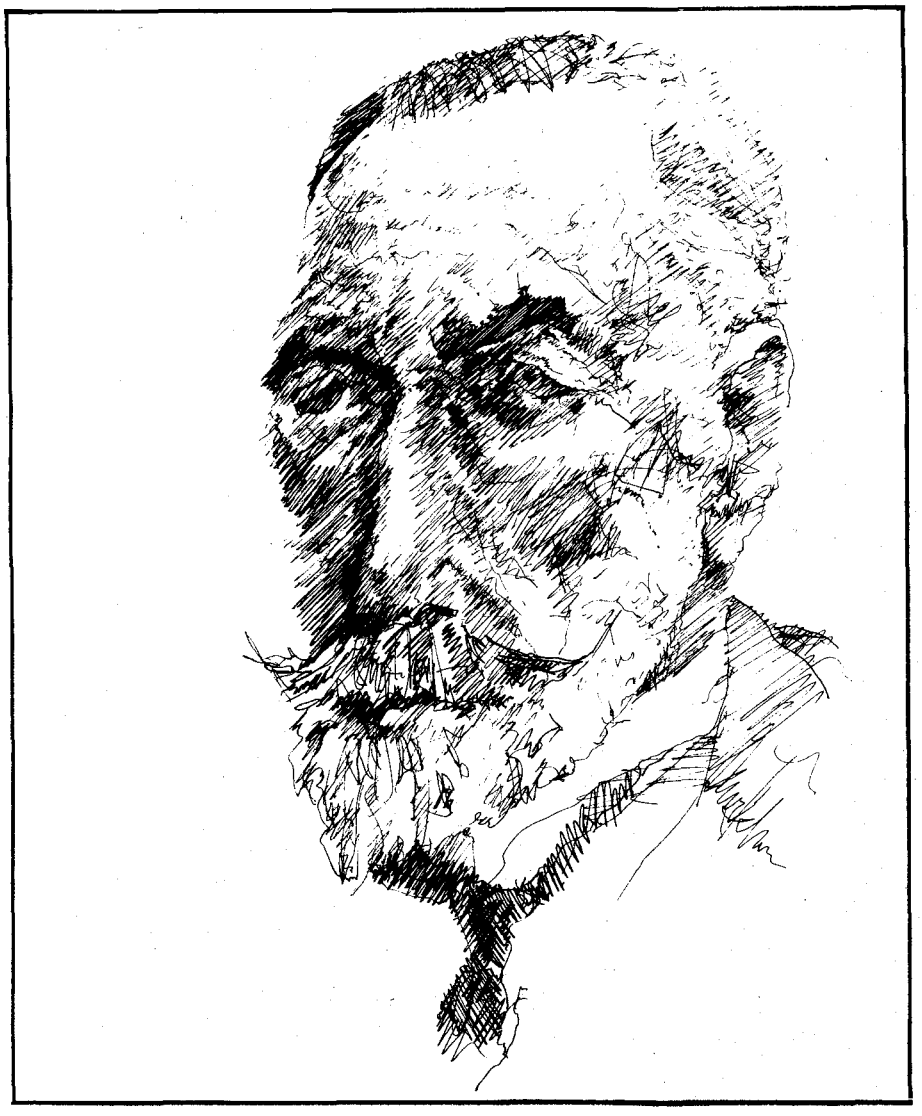

drawing of Joseph Conrad by David Schorr

Polish past, the initiate of all the destructive legacies of 19th-century thought, had walked the Wasteland from childhood on; the terrors which history had in store for the generations of Henry James or of T. S. Eliot had been his birthright.

He lost his mother at eight, his father at 12, his country at 17. But if loneliness was his birthright, so was an acute sense of human interdependence. After his father's death he had had to depend on his uncle and grandmother; and later, as a young officer at sea, had had to rely on the solidarity and cooperation of his crew. A man with these experiences could not accept alienation as *the* human condition. In his work he would look for a way out of exile, and this brings him even closer to us. We feel that he knows the worst about modern life, but that he will not rest in the dispiriting piety of the Wasteland. His gloom is real but problematic. He knows our sorrows; he knows our hungers too.

Paradoxically, Conrad is our contemporary because he so fully faced the major moral and artistic challenges of the late 19th century. With admirable discretion of statement, Watt shows how far Conrad's insights into the problems of modern social organization were in accord with the ideas of the leading social theorists of his day, notably Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies. From his years at sea (and it is worth remembering that he began as an able seaman and worked his way up to captain) he knew that the authority created by the modern division of labor was tenuous: the inequality of status necessary for economic efficiency could produce resentment and "anomie," that state of lawlessness about which Durkheim warned and into which the crew of the *Narcissus* is plunged. The combination of traditional and rational social forms aboard ship, moreover, gave Conrad an equally prescient apprehension of the problems of social adhesion that Tönnies discussed in his *Community and Society* (1887): problems that are reflected in the tensions on board the *Narcissus* and that may be said to flourish in modernizing societies generally. As for the pessimism of Conrad's "further vision," which chilled Bertrand Russell (from a letter to Russell: "I have never been able to find in any man's book or any man's talk anything convincing enough to stand up for a moment against my deep-seated sense of fatality governing this man-inhabited world"), Watt convincingly argues that this was not a stubborn vestige of Conrad's Slavic soul; cosmological pessimism was part of the climate of opinion in the 1890s; doom was in the air. And in any case, the boy who had looked on while his mother slowly died of tuberculosis could hardly believe in the just "governance of the universe," any more than the captain who had run a steamer up the Congo could mistake the scramble for loot going on there for an exercise of pity and progress. With Ibsen, Watt writes, Conrad knew that cosmic and political illusions were the props of social stability. But he could not share them; his earned cynicism made that impossible.

Conrad, though, was not primarily a thinker; he was an artist who created some of the most haunting images of disorder and endurance in modern literature. Watt's approach to Conrad's art is once again partly historical as he demonstrates the unique fusion of impressionist and symbolist techniques which Conrad made use of in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*. Conrad may have employed the techniques; he could not be a member of the schools. The impressionists, for example, saw life as a "picture," but to him it was a "presence" full of hidden meaning. His novels present an impressionist surface narrative made up of vividly realized particulars caught in a moment of rushed awareness by a distracted or divided mind; yet the details thus caught are invariably resonant, symbolic in both the largest and most immediate

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KEY TO THE HIGHWAY

I remember riding somewhere in a fast car
with my brother and his friend Jack Brooks
and we were listening to "Layla & Other Love Songs"
by Derek & the Dominos. The night was dark,
dark all along the highway. Jack Brooks was
a pretty funny guy, and I was delighted
by the comradely interplay between him and my brother,
but I tried not to show it for fear of inhibiting them.
I tried to be reserved and maintain a certain
dignity appropriate to my age, older by four years.
They knew the Dominos album well having played the cassette
many times, and they knew how much they liked it.
As we rode on in the dark I felt the music was,
after all, wonderful, and I said so
with as much dignity as possible. "That's right,"
said my brother. "You're getting smarter," said Jack.
We were listening to "Bell Bottom Blues"
at that moment. Later we were listening to
"Key to the Highway", and I remember how
my brother said, "Yeah, yeah." And Jack sang
one of the lines in a way that made me laugh.
I am upset by the fact that that night is so absolutely gone.
No, "upset" is too strong. Or is it.
But that night is so obscure—until now
I may not have thought of that ride once
in eight years—and this obscurity troubles me.
Death is going to defeat us all so easily.
Jack Brooks is in Florida, I believe,
and I may never see him again, which is
more or less all right with me; he and my brother
lost touch some years ago. I wonder
where we were going that night. I don't know;
but it seemed as if we had the key to the highway.

Mark Halliday

senses. (Think of that French Man of War firing into the African continent in *Heart of Darkness*.) In this kind of writing, as Watt says, every word is symbolic.

Placing Conrad as an artist in his time is important, since it is easy to think of him vaulting straight to Parnassus from some timeless quarter deck. But an even greater achievement lies in Watt's readings of *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, and not so much in the readings themselves as in the method that guides them. This involves "a primary commitment to what may be called the literal imagination—the analytic commentary restricts itself to what the imagination can discover through a literal meaning of the work." What this means in practice is that when Watt encounters a dense Conradian passage such as the scene in *Heart of Darkness* in which Marlow is ushered into the office of the director of the trading company, there to find his way blocked by two secretaries "knitting black wool," he does not make the knitters the basis for a total reading of the novel that depends on the extravagant assumption that these two ladies stand for the Fates in the Greek mythology or similar figures in the *Inferno* or *The Book of Kells*. On the contrary, he assumes that the symbolic reference of the verbal sign must be open, not closed, and that the symbolic meaning arises from "the natural associations of the object not from a pre-established body of ideas, stories, myths." He responds, in other words, to what Conrad wrote.

That may not seem like a very radical thing to do, but in fact it is. For if widely adopted, the method of literal reading would put half the critics now working out of their main line of business. This can be described, with only minor damage to the truth, as the turning of literary criticism into a cognitive scandal in which a reading based on what the words on the page naturally suggest is a confession of cowardice, the infallible sign of a feeble will to power on the part of the critic. All the reader committed to the literal imagination foreswears is dazzling fatuity; he gains intellectual power. For as Ian Watt's chapter on *Heart of Darkness* makes clear, literal reading makes the text grow in local meanings ("It is not that the knitter reminds us of the classical Fates which really matters, but that she is herself a fate—a dehumanized death in life to herself and to others, and thus a prefiguring symbol of what the trading company does to its creatures") at the expense of those thumping meanings involving dusty divinities from antiquity which make your soul feel like a graduate school. Watt's method not only respects the autonomy of the text; it gives greater play to the reader's interpretative autonomy. Instead of looking for a single pattern of meaning and then stopping in a fit of self-congratulation, the literal reader must shift and bounce with the diverse promptings of the words before him. He must aspire to the exalted state of Henry James's ideal critic, his perception always "at the pitch of passion." For an example of such a critic at work—now historical, now biographical, now interpretative, often brilliant, and always truth-seeking—the reader has only to turn to Watt's discussion of *Lord Jim*.

Some of Professor Watt's pages, it must be said, are slow going. Concepts like synchrony, anachrony, and prolepsis may be helpful in unraveling the whorled plot of *Lord Jim*, but the words are barbarous and should not have been used so often. In the balance of one's estimate of the book, however, this fault weighs feather-lightly against the personal qualities of the author, which manage to show through on even the most academic page. Ian Watt is one of those rare scholars who seems to be of the same order of seriousness as his subject. This, I suspect, is why he can say the essential thing about Conrad's tortured private life: that, with Dr.

Coming:
Freeman Dyson on
Robert Oppenheimer.

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Johnson, he is "one of the great heroes of the wars of the mind." Why, too, he can end his chapter on the *Narcissus* with a moving apotheosis to Singleton, the old sailor who stood at the wheel for 30 hours during one of the worst storms in literature and to whom Conrad delivers a paean ending with the terse salute, "He steered with care."

> To make us see the ultimate and universal basis of human solidarity Conrad has reserved his greatest art to make us pause at the spectacle of a man who steers with care; and this vivid moment constrains us, in Auden's words, to 'Give/ Our gratitude to the Invisible College of the Humble./ Who through the ages have accomplished everything essential.'
>
> There is surely a special moral for readers and critics here: for, in making us look up to Singleton at the wheel, Conrad compels us, in a humbling moment of awed vision, to acknowledge our solidarity with those who cannot write and who read only Bulwer-Lytton.

One wants to cheer. The world is full of men and women like Singleton, people of whom it can be said that they steered with care. But how rare it is that the educated literary imagination bothers to notice them! In this, as in so much else, Conrad has made Ian Watt see.

Jack Beatty

Brief Review

The Gasoline Wars by Jean Thompson

(University of Illinois Press; $10, $3.95 paper)

In these craftsmanlike and quietly emotive stories, which feature small-town midwesterners trying to patch together some semblance of an orderly existence, Jean Thompson returns repeatedly to the idea that each of us fabricates life with the same kind of imaginative vigor that writers bring to their work.

This intense mental activity is potentially damaging as well as illuminating. The narrator in "Dry Spring," dwelling obsessively upon her unhappiness, finds in the parched Ohio landscape, in the long leaden days, and in her own sterile body all the physical manifestations of her crumbling marriage to a teacher and struggling writer. As the hot, monotonous days drag on, they seem to reflect and enlarge her own torpor: "Eventually the sky would split and the earth turn black in a soaking rain, the new leaves shredding in cold wind, rocks boiling up from the mud as a hillside sank away. Nothing would stay as it was, but for once I wished to shape things as I chose." Resenting her husband's joyless absorption in his writing—"I knew he had some part of me in that locked drawer, like a voodoo priest's hunk of rags and hair"—she waits, craftily, for just the right moment to confront him: "I had my secret words, just as he did, and I was determined to say them."

She observes Dennis with cold calculation, as she imagines he has been observing her for his artistic purposes, and she greedily collects her justifications for revenge. Getting into bed one night, she watches him distantly as he flips socks and wadded underwear into corners:

> The single downturned beam of the Tensor lamp sculpted the walls into fans of light, huge looping shadows. Dennis sat on the edge of the bed and his backbone was transformed into exaggerated ridges and hollows, as dramatic as a dinosaur skeleton or the girders of a bridge.
>
> Dennis, I said, speaking to that fantastic structure, do you use real people when you write?
>
> He turned and his face was thrown into the same strange relief. His eyes and nose dripped shadows, like an exotic mask. It's all fiction, you know that.

She knows very well that Dennis's work is not all fiction, but she fails to see the extent to which her life has become a fiction of her own: she has cast herself in the role of victim. Her desire to shape things as she chooses does not lead to greater control over her life, but, in the story's unexpected climax, to an act of gratuitous malice against a stanger. Thompson takes over when her characters stumble, bringing to these stories subtle currents of humor and irony.

This is an honest and sympathetic collection. Thompson catches her characters with their defenses down, at critically revealing moments of peevishness, confusion, or sudden, painful self-knowledge. Such moments, as she shows in many of these stories, can be restorative and constructive, unlike the anguished grappling of the narrator in "Dry Spring." Thompson needs to work more on developing convincing dialogue; occasionally she touches upon a hackneyed theme; at times her symbolism is overwrought. But *The Gasoline Wars* as a whole suffers very little from the lapses in aesthetic judgment that plague many young writers. Jean Thompson possesses a resoundingly distinctive voice.

Dorothy Wickenden

Correspondence, *from page 3*

Hughes is simply wrong to assert that *The Brethren* shows no understanding that the Court's "body of opinions can only be achieved by patient, often exhausting, exchanges among the Justices and their staffs in an effort to find a principled position to which a majority can adhere." Just this point is illustrated again and again in the book. For confirmation, one need only look at Woodward's and Armstrong's lengthy, excellent account of the Nixon tapes case.

The authors do take note of the politicking and ego-stroking that sometimes go on behind the scenes at the Court, and they do expose the human failings and personality quirks of the Justices. Hughes is right: this may not have much to do with the legal soundness or weakness of the Court's decisions. So what? In my reading, at least, all Woodward and Armstrong are trying to do is depict the political and personal context within which decisions are made, not to suggest that the content of decisions necessarily lacks a genuine legal basis. Hughes fails to make it clear whether he is denying that politics is integral to the Court's decision-making process or merely finds documentation of this fact to be repugnant.

A final point. Hughes excoriates the authors for "villifying" Chief Justice Warren Burger. The images of Burger and of some of his fellow Justices that emerge from *The Brethren* are not flattering, but Woodward and Armstrong are hardly the first persons to suggest publicly that Burger is egocentric and lacks intellectual fitness. Hughes is entitled to his own opinion about Burger's qualifications and character, but I am annoyed by his unsubstantiated accusation that Woodward and Armstrong systematically denigrated Burger in their book in order to generate headlines and increase sales.

Michael F. Kasprzak
Tacoma, Washington

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Washington Diarist

So now President Carter has declared inflation to be an official "crisis" too, and another reason, no doubt, to rally around the incumbent. God help Carter if things ever start getting better under his stewardship. Now White House budgeteers are in a frenzy, looking for places to cut an extra $20 billion or so from the budget they just submitted barely a month ago. This must mean long hours for OMB director James McIntyre, but that shouldn't bother him. After all, McIntyre just returned from a nice taxpayer-financed vacation (official label: "familiarization tour") in Israel and Egypt. Egypt, according to a fascinating story by Christopher Wren buried in the *Times* a couple weeks ago, is now a favorite spot for governmental junketeers, especially in the winter months. Congressional junkets are an old story, but I hadn't realized the extent of executive branch boondoggles. McIntyre and his party of 31 (including four congressmen and their wives) flew into Cairo on an Air Force jet and had an equivalent number of paying guests evicted from a luxury hotel to make room for them. A close look at the pyramids is essential, I suppose, for someone dedicated to the elimination of wasteful government projects. But what possible justification could there have been for a subsequent visit to Egypt by HEW secretary Pat Harris? A cabinet secretary doesn't simply show up in a distant country; first she sends an "advance team" to scout out the territory. This may seem a bit extravagant, but such caution pays dividends. Harris's advance team, for example, discovered that the flight she was supposed to take from Lagos, Nigeria to Cairo had no first-class section. Can you imagine? Luckily, our welfare queen was able to book first class from Lagos to Rome, and thence to Cairo, and avoid the indignity of flying tourist.

We poured ourselves a small sherry and settled down to enjoy an evening of light middlebrow entertainment, only to discover, to our annoyance, that it was "pledge week" on our local public television station. This is the biannual ritual in which the programming is interlarded with sales pitches, many times longer and infinitely more offensive than commercials, asking for contributions to the station. Unction specialists travel the country arranging these appeals to snobbery and guilt. The version being performed in DC last week came complete with a breathy blond stumbling over her cue cards and ad libbing lines like, "Oh dear, I'm just going to spend all my money unless I stop taking advantage of these wonderful special offers!" "Non-commercial" television is like an old virgin schoolmistress type who kisses the widower next door at a church social and decides that, having sinned, there's nothing to it but to become a prostitute. What would happen if, instead of these degrading charades, the stations simply—gasp—sold an equivalent amount of time in commercials? Figuring the cost of staging the affairs, and also the fact that all the contributions they bring in are tax-deductible (meaning the government pays a large chunk anyhow), it probably would turn out that these pledge weeks are wasteful as well as embarrassing.

Hill and Knowlton, the public relations firm, continues to keep this journal informed by special messenger about the terrible dangers posed by legislation to deregulate the trucking industry. (Client: the American Trucking Associations, Inc.) I have already reported a December broadside entitled "Trucking Deregulation to Make Christmas More Costly." Since then, we have received "Trucking Deregulation Raises U.S. Security Concerns," which points out that "recent events in Iran and Afghanistan have underscored to the American people the necessity for defense preparedness at home." A lot of military material travels by truck, it seems, and deregulation "will require substantial changes." It also poses the danger of "what could be a serious threat to the public if ammunitions and explosives are carelessly handled by inexperienced transporters." This is all according to a former Commerce Department official. In "Economist Predicts Deregulation Will Be Costly For U.S. Business," we learn that Michael K. Evans believes, against all logic, that deregulation will reduce productivity and lead to higher prices. Evans is one of the two or three leading econometric consultants in the country. These are economists who design huge computer programs, then hire themselves out to businessmen to predict whatever the businessmen want predicted, citing the computer as authority. (See "The Future Hustle," *TNR*, February 4, 1978.)

A volunteer group of busybodies calling itself the Task Force on Families of Catastrophe has prepared a 600-page report to the State Department on what to do when the Iran hostages are released. They call it "Operation Welcome Home Hostages," although the first thing they recommend is to keep the hostages and their families apart for a week except for packages and closed-circuit television. "While it slowly dawns on the hostages that they are free," says one Dr. Figley, "the family shifts from a family of waiting to one of welcoming." He recommends, according to the *Times*, a "24-hour national celebration plus local festivities. . . . Soon afterwards, however, the families should be protected, cloistered in their homes and offered gifts of food as a hospitable gesture." But: "Four weeks after any release, the hostages and their families should have a reunion. . . ." Needless to say, the families should "be consulted on major service programs developed for them." The task force encourages the State Department to "maintain contact," yet "encourage the families to celebrate the return in their own way"; and to "develop long-term, unobtrusive research and evaluation programs." Before Dr. Figley and his friends get done fooling with them, the hostages may long for the peace and quiet of Tehran.

When Nelson Rockefeller sold his large estate in northwest Washington to a real estate developer a couple years ago, a neighbor complained to the newspapers that the neighborhood would be ruined by "a lot of ticky-tacky $300,000 townhouses." The first advertisements for the development have begun to appear, and the neighbors can relax. It will consist of "masterpiece homes in the Palladian mode created for the discerning, priced from $415,000." In the usual Washington real estate parlance, a home is not a house, but something less: a rowhouse or a condominium apartment. But a saleswoman at "Foxhall Crescents" assured me that each unit will be an actual detached house with four outside walls of its own. This must be what ran up the price. The newspaper ad contains that HUD-mandated little symbol of a house with an equal sign inside it, indicating the realtor's commitment to "equal housing opportunity." The law, in its majesty, permits rich and poor alike to buy a $415,000 home on the former Rockefeller estate.

M.E.K.

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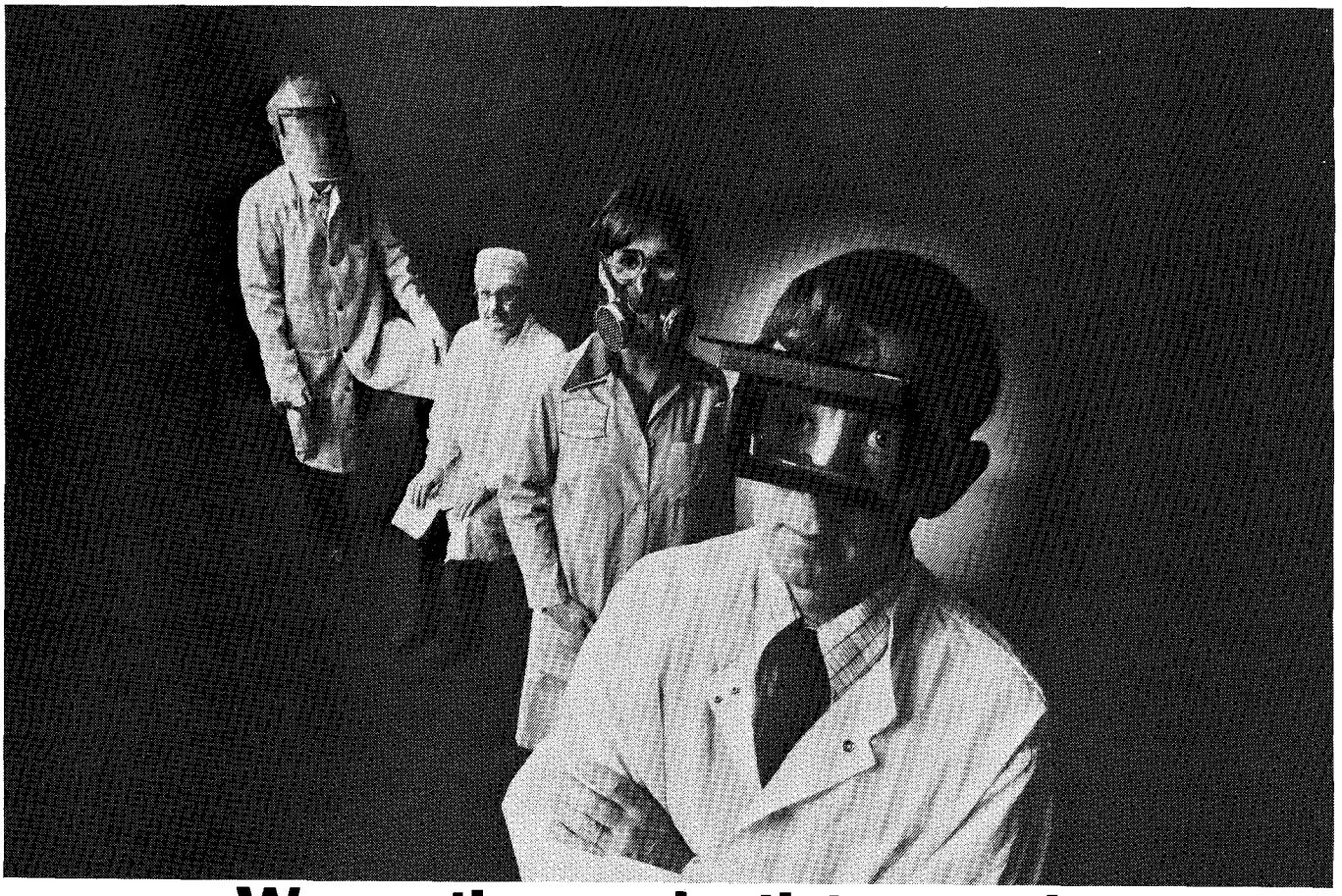

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